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Report Reference

REPORT BY
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CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Cymmer Infant School is situated in the community of Cymmer, on the outskirts of Porth, Rhondda Cynon Taff. It caters for 118 pupils between the ages of 3 and 7 and they represent the full ability range. The school draws its pupils from the immediate locality. The area is described as primarily economically disadvantaged and 40% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. 33% of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN); no pupil currently holds a statement of educational need.

The school development plan (SDP) includes the following targets:

- to raise pupils' standards of achievement;
- to introduce the performance management framework;
- to improve assessment and recording in the foundation subjects;
- to improve the environment of the school.

The acting headteacher and acting deputy have only been in post for a short period of time. New initiatives have been introduced and others extended. The school is developing well.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

This is a school with many good features. The head and staff are highly committed to the school and succeed in creating a caring environment which is conducive to learning.

- The quality of provision for children under-five is appropriate and promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Standards of achievement are as follows:

	Nursery	Reception
Language, literacy and communication skills	Satisfactory	Good
Personal and social development	Good	Good
Mathematical development	Satisfactory	Good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Good	Good
Creative development	Good	Good
Physical development	Good	Good

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

	Key Stage 1
English	Good
Mathematics	Good
Science	Satisfactory
Welsh Second Language	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Good
Information Technology	Satisfactory
History	Good
Geography	Good
Art	Very Good
Music	Good
Physical Education	Good
Religious Education	Satisfactory

- The quality of teaching was judged to be very good in 10% of lessons, good in 53% and satisfactory in the remaining 37%. In the best teaching, expectations are high, initial presentations are consistently of good quality and there is good use of questioning to develop pupils' understanding. Where teaching is less effective, the organisation of group activities does not ensure sufficient teacher intervention to support and challenge pupils to extend their learning.
- Standards in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication skills (ICT) across the curriculum, are satisfactory. Good standards are achieved in listening and in writing in subjects such as history. In Welsh lessons, pupils make increasing use of their oral, reading and writing skills.
- The school provides a broad and relevant curriculum and pupils are offered good quality experiences that enrich their learning. The good range of extra-curricular activities, including school clubs and visits to places of interest, enhance the curriculum. There is a uniform system of planning across the school which ensures consistency of approach in the planning and organisation of the curriculum. Individual teacher planning is detailed and tasks are well matched to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities.
- The school's provision for pupils with SEN is good and pupils make consistent progress in their work. Pupils have access to a broad curriculum and are offered additional good quality support in small groups.
- The school has comprehensive policies and procedures for assessing pupils' progress and detailed records are kept of individual progress in the core and foundation subjects. All work is marked but written comments do not offer pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve their work.
- The acting head offers the school good leadership and has introduced a number of effective initiatives. She works closely with the acting deputy head in moving the school forward. The governing body is highly supportive of the school and undertakes its responsibilities conscientiously with the support and guidance of

the acting head and the Unitary Authority's (UA) officers. The SDP includes suitable targets for a wide range of curricular and general matters. The targets are being addressed and good progress is being made in seeking improvements. The head and governing body manage the financial resources carefully with good support from the UA's finance officer.

- The quality of the school's provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is very good. Staff offer pupils praise for positive effort and achievement and they successfully motivate them to give of their best. Pupils' moral and social development is good and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are courteous and well behaved and their attendance levels are satisfactory.
- The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues identified for attention in the previous inspection report.
- Partnership with parents and the community, schools and other institutions is good. The school values opportunities to enhance pupils' learning by establishing links with the community and with outside agencies.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Pupils' standards of achievement are very good in 5% of lessons, good in 65% and satisfactory in the remaining 30%.

- Children under five make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Standards of achievement are good in most areas of learning.
- In KS1, standards in listening are very good. Standards in reading and writing are good and satisfactory in speaking. Standards in mathematics are good and satisfactory in science. Standards in art are very good. Standards in design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education are good. Standards in Welsh second language, information technology and religious education are satisfactory.
- Girls generally make better progress than boys. The school is aware of this and is taking appropriate measures to address the issue by reviewing materials and teaching approaches and by participating in the local schools' gender project. Pupils with SEN make good progress in relation to their ability.
- The school's results in the NC assessment tests and tasks compare very favourably with local and national averages. There has been sustained improvement and test results have matched and exceeded national and LEA averages in the core subject indicator. In the non-statutory tests in 2002, the number of pupils gaining level 3 was above the national average.

3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills Across the Curriculum

The standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum are satisfactory. There is insufficient whole school planning for progression across the subjects.

- Children under five make good progress in their ability to apply and improve their literacy and numeracy skills in the six areas of learning. The children's ICT skills are less well developed
- In KS1, pupils listen well and contribute satisfactorily during discussion sessions in subjects such as history and science. More able pupils express their opinions confidently.
- Pupils' reading for information in a range of subjects is satisfactory. There is limited use of the library to extend pupils' research skills.
- Pupils write in a range of forms and record their experiences and observations effectively in their work across the curriculum. More able pupils record their observations clearly and accurately in subjects such as history
- Pupils enjoy their Welsh lessons and have a satisfactory understanding of basic patterns and vocabulary.
- Pupils make satisfactory use of their numeracy skills in other subjects. Pupils apply their knowledge and skills well in geography, science and design technology. Pupils measure, collect data and use graphs to present their findings.
- Pupils use their ICT skills satisfactorily to present their work in language and to record and present data in mathematics.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Pupils' moral and social development is good and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.

- The school has a caring environment where pupils feel safe and valued. There are good relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. Pupils co-operate and take turns during group activities and there are opportunities for pupils to take responsibility.
- Acts of worship make an effective contribution to the caring Christian ethos of the school. Pupils compose their own prayers and share them with the school. These are happy occasions but opportunities are sometimes missed for quiet reflection and for developing a sense of awe and wonder.
- Visitors to school and outings into the locality enhance provision by raising awareness of the needs of others. Pupils realise that there are less fortunate people in the world and recognise a responsibility by supporting charities.

- Pupils' cultural development is developing satisfactorily through subjects such as art, geography and history. They are learning about the culture of Wales through stories, dance and celebrations. They have limited knowledge about the festivals of other faiths and show little awareness of the diversity of other cultures.
- Teachers use praise and encouragement consistently. This results in a positive atmosphere throughout the school. Good behaviour is recognised and pupils' ideas are valued. Individual effort and progress are acknowledged in the weekly achievement assembly.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and understand that rules are important to ensure everyone is treated fairly. Through curriculum teaching and circle time they explore conflict situations and discuss the implications and possible outcomes.

8.1 Behaviour and attitudes

Standards of behaviour are good throughout the school.

- Good attitudes are displayed towards all aspects of work and pupils enjoy working together in groups.
- Rewards, praise and the sharing of achievements are used effectively by all staff to promote good behaviour.
- Appropriate procedures are in place to identify and eliminate discrimination and bullying.
- Pupils respect the school rules and show courtesy and consideration to others.
- There are no exclusions.

8.2 Attendance

Attendance rates are satisfactory.

- Pupils are encouraged and rewarded for good attendance.
- Attendance is carefully monitored and the school works closely with the Education Welfare Officer.
- Parents notify the school when their children are absent.
- Registration is conducted efficiently and complies with statutory requirements.

8 QUALITY OF TEACHING

8.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching was very good in 10 % of lessons, good in 53% and satisfactory in the remaining 37%.

- Teachers have a sound understanding of the majority of the subjects that they teach and make good use of a range of teaching methods and resources. Lessons are well planned and offer pupils varied and interesting experiences. There is regular use of individual, paired and group activities.
- When teaching is good or very good, expectations are high, initial presentations are consistently of good quality, there is good use of questioning and tasks correspond well to the needs of pupils of different abilities. Plenary sessions are used effectively to reinforce the learning.
- In the nursery classes, there is no clear focus to play activities, including outdoor play, and as a result children's skills are insufficiently extended during these activities. The number and range of activities provided during group sessions makes it difficult for teaching staff to adequately support children's learning.
- Group discussion activities are insufficiently used to extend pupils' oral skills and pupils are not challenged consistently to offer extended responses.

8.1 Assessment, recording and reporting

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good.

- The headteacher and the deputy have responsibility for assessment. There is a comprehensive policy outlining the processes operating in the school.
- Entry and baseline assessments provide useful information, and teacher assessment at the end of KS 1 is conscientiously carried out.
- Systems for identifying pupils with SEN are good and information is used to set targets in pupils' individual education plans (IEPs).
- Comprehensive reading records and standardised test scores provide evidence of progress. Home/school reading diaries provide additional support and promote partnership with parents.
- Detailed records are kept of individual progress in the core and foundation subjects. These provide a record of work covered but do not inform future planning sufficiently for teaching and learning.
- KS1 pupils undertake assessment tasks in the core subjects at the end of each term. These are levelled against NC criteria and identify the way forward. They provide a useful record of progress made.

- Pupils' work is dated and marked. Effort is acknowledged but teachers' comments do not offer pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve their work.
- Teachers complete weekly evaluation forms on the work covered. Comments are often a report of how activities were received rather than identifying future teaching and learning needs.
- Parents are invited into school twice a year to discuss their child's progress. The end of year reports comply with statutory guidelines and give an accurate picture of pupil progress in all subjects. The best examples give guidance on the way forward and this element could be further developed across the school.
- All pupils have individual targets for numeracy and literacy which are reviewed termly. These are sometimes too broad for pupils to have ownership and to measure progress.

8.1 Curriculum

The school provides a broad curriculum which meets the requirements of the NC and religious education.

- The curriculum provided for children under five is appropriate and promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. The planning is comprehensive and detailed.
- Whole-school policies and schemes of work have been formulated for all the subjects. They offer teachers good guidelines on planning the curriculum.
- Individual teacher planning is detailed and ensures suitable progression in the core subjects. In a small number of foundation subjects, there is insufficient progression in pupils' knowledge and skills as they proceed through the school.
- The curriculum is differentiated effectively to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities.
- Whole-school planning highlights opportunities for developing the key skills across the curriculum. To date, these opportunities are not utilised fully to extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The development of pupils' ICT skills is insufficiently structured.
- Pupils' personal and social education is promoted effectively across the curriculum and throughout the school.
- Appropriate attention is paid to the 'Cwricwlwm Cymreig' in class themes and through geography, history and music lessons. There is good use of the local area as a focus for work in geography. The curriculum is reinforced by educational visits and by the contributions of adults invited to the school. The after school club in Welsh folk dancing extends pupils' skills. There is good use of grants, such as the Welsh Arts Council grant, to develop aspects of the curriculum.

- The school has a clear policy on Race Equality and Cultural Diversity.
- Homework strengthens the link with the home and provides a means of consolidating and extending pupils' skills. The school has a relevant home-school contract.
- All pupils have equal opportunities of access to the NC.

8.1 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

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

- The atmosphere in the school is happy, safe and caring. All staff know the pupils well and take a keen interest in their personal development and welfare.
- Staff offer pupils praise for positive effort and achievement and they successfully motivate them to give of their best.
- The school policies on sex education, health education and health and safety are implemented.
- The school applies the UA's child protection policy and staff are trained in its requirements.
- Arrangements are in place to deal with pupils who are ill or who have an accident. The school makes good provision for first aid.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils are well supervised throughout the day and they readily turn to adults when help and support is needed.
- Liaison with external agencies and the use of specialist support is good.

5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs

The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is good.

- There are 39 pupils on the SEN register; no pupil currently holds a statement of educational need. There is a newly revised whole school policy for SEN and procedures comply with the requirements of the new code of practice.
- There is effective early identification of pupils with SEN using a nursery entry assessment profile and reception statutory baseline. Diagnostic tests and teacher assessments are used to measure progress and to inform planning.
- The SEN co-ordinator assists the class teacher and the SEN support teacher in the writing of individual education plans (IEPs). These set appropriate short step targets for language and numeracy, which are reviewed each term.

- Pupils with SEN receive effective group support in class, from a part-time teacher and from learning support staff. Although the work is appropriately differentiated in these sessions, the individual IEP targets are not always reflected in the activities.
- Pupils in Y2 are withdrawn for language support sessions once a week. This work reinforces the objectives set out in the IEPs. The headteacher provides additional reading support for individual pupils. There is currently no withdrawal support for numeracy.
- The school has effective liaison with external support agencies and appropriate records are kept in individual pupil files.
- Parents of pupils with SEN are kept well informed of their children's progress and sign IEP review sheets three times a year. Pupils with SEN also benefit from an effective whole-school homework diary system, which supports regular communication between home and school.
- The governor with responsibility for SEN is kept well informed and supports the school in the development of the SEN policies.

8.1 Partnership with parents, community, schools and other institutions

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

- The school has a very good relationship with parents and a small number of parents help out in the school on a regular basis.
- Parents are kept well informed by the school prospectus, newsletters, school reports and regular meetings.
- Parents are appreciative of the ready access they have to the headteacher and all members of staff.
- There is a Parents Association which successfully raises funds for the school.
- There are very good pastoral, curricular and administrative links with the junior school and a close relationship with the comprehensive school. Pupils from the neighbouring Welsh comprehensive school work alongside KS1 pupils to extend the pupils' Welsh skills. This is a good initiative. The school benefits from the partnership with the initial teacher training colleges.
- Links with the community have a positive impact on the life and work of the school and serve to enhance the quality of learning.
- The school receives good support from the UA and outside agencies.

8.2 Partnership with Industry

Partnership with industry and local business is satisfactory.

- The school has set suitable targets to improve and extend links with industry and local business.
- The school has received some financial support from local companies including the purchase of soft play equipment and a grant from the Welsh Arts Council for ceramic work.
- Good links exist with the Education Business Partnership.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement

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

- The school is developing appropriate procedures for evaluating standards and the quality of provision. A programme of areas for review has been prepared and co-ordinators with responsibility for the core subjects and geography have been released from class duties to carry out their monitoring duties. These include monitoring samples of work, teacher planning, and classroom observation to review general priorities. The co-ordinators' role in monitoring standards of achievement in the foundation subjects is yet to be developed.
- The current SDP is a comprehensive document and notes suitable targets for curricular and general matters. The previous SDP has been evaluated by the acting headteacher and an audit of need undertaken. Detailed action plans have been prepared and good progress is being made in addressing a number of the targets set. The acting head's self-evaluation report provides a valuable analysis and establishes priority areas for development.
- Job descriptions are available and they indicate clearly the individual duties and responsibilities to be undertaken by each member of staff. Curricular responsibilities have been shared between members of staff and they undertake their planning and advisory role effectively. The acting headteacher and acting deputy collaborate closely.
- The results of internal and NC assessments are analysed and compared with benchmark information. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for improvement. The results achieved in 2001-2 exceeded the targets set. The use of pupil targets arising from teacher assessment in English and mathematics is developing well.

6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The quality of leadership and efficiency is satisfactory.

- The acting headteacher is conscientious and industrious and offers the school good leadership. She is developing new policies and procedures that are improving the quality of the educational provision.
- The school has good aims which are well supported by parents.
- The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities with increasing confidence. It has adopted a good range of policies and receives termly updates on a range of issues. Members are very supportive of the school.
- The general budget is managed carefully by the governing body with good support from the UA's finance officer. The school works within its allocated budget and every effort is made to ensure best value for money. School priorities as listed in the SDP are costed.
- The day to day administration of the school is good.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

The management of resources is good.

- There is sufficient appropriately qualified staff to meet the needs of the school. The professional development of staff is well managed by the in-service training [INSET] co-ordinator and staff have benefited from attending a good range of training courses. Recently appointed staff and supply teachers have been well integrated into the school. The specialist SEN teacher and the Welsh language teacher provide good support. Classroom assistants and support staff make a valuable contribution to the work of the school. Good quality support staff work closely with pupils with SEN.
- The school has adequate teaching accommodation for the number of pupils on roll. Space is limited in some classes but good use is made of the space available. The building is well maintained internally and there have been significant improvements to the internal fabric, layout and facilities. Throughout the school, displays of pupils' work contribute to creating an attractive learning environment. The exterior of the building, including the play facilities, has been improved but the boundary wall is not secure throughout.
- Resources for learning are generally good but access to computers is more limited. There is a well-resourced library, and the hall is used extensively. There is a good range of teaching and learning materials to support curriculum areas.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Provision for the under-fives

The provision for the under-fives is appropriate and promotes the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

Good features

Nursery Class (3-4 years old)

- The children's personal and social development is good. All children participate happily in a range of activities. They relate well to adults and to each other, working and playing co-operatively. They respond well to class rules and routines and demonstrate an awareness of right and wrong. In circle time they are beginning to explore and express their feelings in response to Bible stories.
- The children's language and literacy skills are satisfactory. Children listen very well in class sessions and can follow simple instructions in physical education. All children contribute enthusiastically to class sessions responding to a range of stories, poems and rhymes. They are able to recall facts about recent experiences. Using the listening centre, they comment on recordings of class activities.
- Children handle books with care and are able find books that include their favourite stories. In the big book sessions, they join in with repeated phrases and respond appropriately as the story line develops. They show a developing understanding that print conveys meaning. Most children can recognise their name. Pre-writing skills are developing appropriately. Children trace pictures and overwrite with increasing accuracy. More able children can write their name.
- The children's mathematical development is satisfactory. Children are able to sort and match objects according to size, shape and colour and can name simple two dimensional (2D) shapes. They are beginning to use the mathematical language of capacity and weight and are able to use the comparative language of measure when talking about the story of the three bears. More able children can count to ten and are beginning to recognise numerals.
- The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. The children are developing a good understanding of the world around them. They can identify items on the autumn display and describe the changes that happen at this time of the year. They know that places in other parts of the world experience different climate and can name animals that live in cold countries. Through topic related experiences they can talk about shopping for ingredients and the changes that occur when making porridge. They are beginning to learn about electronic equipment, successfully using the mouse to operate computer programs.
- The children's creative development is good. The children experiment with a range of materials, making choices about colour and medium. They know that when yellow and blue play-dough is mixed it will become green. They paint and draw with developing skill and print effectively with a range of objects, fruit and vegetables.
- Children sing songs and rhymes with confidence and expression keeping a steady rhythm when using percussion instruments for accompaniment. They show co-operation and imagination in role-play situations linked to the story of the three bears.

- The children's physical development is good. Children demonstrate an increasing control and co-ordination in physical education sessions. They show an awareness of space and others around them, varying the pace and direction of their movements, and they experiment confidently when working on large apparatus. Children roll and cut dough effectively to make shapes, build with construction toys and use various writing tools competently.

Shortcomings

- A good number of children have an insecure grasp of number processes.
- Children do not talk to adults at length about their experiences, ideas and impressions.

Reception (4-5 year olds)

- The children's personal and social development is good. Children feel secure in a supportive environment and are developing personal independence. They demonstrate care and concern for their peers and adults. They play happily together, work co-operatively in groups and relate appropriately to adults. They understand the need for rules and respond to instructions.
- The children's language and literacy development is good. The children's listening skills are very good. Children display high levels of concentration during class sessions. They join in enthusiastically when responding to stories, poems and rhymes. In group work and physical education lessons they follow instructions accurately. Speaking skills are satisfactory. Children join in class discussion and answer appropriately when questioned. They talk freely about themselves and their interests.
- Reading skills are good. The children are interested in books and many act like readers. They recognise common punctuation marks and are beginning to apply phonic rules to decode words. They recognise some high frequency words and the names of characters in the reading scheme. More able children read independently with developing fluency and expression. Writing skills are good. Children respond positively to writing opportunities and are confident to have-a-go. They all attempt to write their own name and letter formation is usually accurate. The more able copy or underwrite their dictated sentences well. These early compositions show imagination.
- The children's mathematical development is good. Children match, sort, order and count sets of objects. More able children can count to twenty, name and order numbers to ten and form numerals correctly. They understand the concept of more and less and can add two sets of objects and calculate how many all together. They can name 2D and some 3D shapes. They know the days of the week and show a developing awareness of the passing of time. They can use the appropriate language of measure and make comparisons.
- The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Children know the different seasons and the associated changes in the weather and can explain

simply how our lives are affected. They use their observational skills well and can describe different materials and textures using suitable vocabulary. They understand that you can make a toy car move by pushing and make sensible comments and suitable predictions about what they see. They have a developing awareness of a fair test. They can use toys to make a practical time line ordering old to new.

- The children's creative development is good. Children work effectively with a range of media to produce paintings, prints, collage and models. They participate enthusiastically in music making sessions. They can name and use a range of percussion instruments, explain how the sounds are made and maintain rhythm when accompanying songs and rhymes. They suggest suitable instruments to represent characters in stories.
- The children's physical development is good. Children demonstrate good spatial awareness when travelling around the hall and move without interfering with others. They move in a variety of ways and in different directions and are able to perform a sequence of movements. They have good balance and are confident on large apparatus. Their fine motor skills are successfully developed through a varied range of craft activities and through opportunities to use writing tools, paint brushes and scissors.

Shortcomings

- Children's oral responses are limited in length and content.
- Less able children lack confidence to talk about mathematical tasks or use mathematical language

English

Standards are very good in listening, good in reading and writing and satisfactory in speaking

Good features

- Pupils listen attentively in class and in group sessions and they respond appropriately to instructions. They can recall detailed information and re-tell stories in sequence.
- Pupils express themselves confidently on a wide range of topics. They readily engage in conversations about themselves and their interests. They give reasoned opinions about things that have happened in the past and talk sensitively about people less fortunate than themselves. The more able use descriptive vocabulary and expressive delivery effectively.
- Pupils enjoy reading and have access to a variety of books, including reference material. They know that a book has a title, an author and an illustrator. All pupils participate enthusiastically in shared reading sessions, reading accurately, predicting outcomes and using expression and tone effectively in response to the

text. More able pupils read very well. They offer opinions on the story line and actions of characters and can explain their preferences.

- Pupils' writing demonstrates a consistent development of handwriting and presentation skills. Their work includes imaginative stories, poems and prayers, letters, simple narrative forms and records of observations. An awareness of phonics, spelling patterns and punctuation rules contributes to a developing independence. More able pupils produce extended pieces of writing in a range of forms, effectively refining their work through drafting and re-drafting.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' reference and library skills are not extended sufficiently.
- A good number of pupils offer limited answers and are unable to organise their speech to communicate effectively with others.

Mathematics

Standards are good.

Good features

- Pupils count and order numbers correctly. They count forwards and backwards with ease and can identify odd and even numbers. They can double and halve numbers correctly. More able pupils are secure in their knowledge of number bonds and patterns and have a good understanding of place value.
- Pupils use a range of mental strategies to calculate accurately. More able pupils can describe the strategies they use.
- Pupils are familiar with 2D and 3D shapes and older pupils can describe their properties well. Pupils have a good knowledge of time facts. They can name the days of the week and the months in the year. Pupils can tell the time on the hour and half past the hour. They can identify coins and simple combinations up to a £1. They use non-standard and standard units to measure length accurately.
- Pupils can collect data and produce accurate bar graphs to represent their findings.
- Pupils have a good understanding of mathematical language. More able pupils apply their mathematical skills satisfactorily in different contexts.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' ability to discuss their work is limited.

Science

Standards are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils' observation skills are good. When studying forces, they observe closely and comment satisfactorily on what they see. They make accurate predictions about the likely outcomes of their investigations.
- Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of physical processes. Y2 pupils can identify light sources and name objects that work by electricity. They understand the basic principles of electric circuits.
- Pupils can name the different parts of the body and more able pupils have a good awareness of the function of the main organs of the body. They understand the features of a healthy diet. They know that a plant needs light and water to grow.
- Pupils have a secure knowledge of materials and their basic properties. They sort materials accurately on the basis of their properties.
- More able pupils have an awareness of the requirements of a fair test.
- Pupils record their observations simply in writing, pictures and tables.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' understanding of scientific concepts is not always secure.
- A good number of pupils lack confidence in describing their investigations and pupils generally do not use scientific vocabulary sufficiently when discussing their work.

Welsh Second Language

Standards are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils enjoy their Welsh lessons and benefit from the regular use of incidental Welsh throughout the day.
- Pupils listen intently and a good number ask and answer questions readily using simple speech patterns and a basic working vocabulary. They respond accurately to instructions and commands. They know their colours, can name different toys and fruits and can describe the weather using correct terms.
- Pupils are eager to take part in all aspects of the work. They sing songs and action songs enthusiastically. Their pronunciation is good.
- The majority of pupils read familiar words correctly.

- Pupils record their work accurately by copying. Older pupils use familiar patterns correctly when they write about things that are within their experience.

Shortcomings

- Pupils generally lack confidence in using Welsh independently of the teacher.
- The reading and writing skills of more able pupils are insufficiently extended.

Design and technology

Standards are good.

Good features

- Pupils use a range of materials, tools and techniques to produce a variety of interesting objects. The quality of the finished products is often good.
- Pupils develop and communicate their ideas well by making freehand drawings. Older pupils produce diagrams and plans with increasing detail.
- Pupils investigate a number of materials and products before planning their own product. They make some independent choices with regard to the design of their products and the materials to be used. They can draw and name the materials they need.
- Pupils' measuring, cutting and shaping skills are good.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of simple mechanisms and can create moving parts for the products they have made. They use construction kits well to explore their understanding of materials and to produce moving models and vehicles.

Shortcomings

- More able pupils' design skills are insufficiently extended.
- Pupils' ability to evaluate their designs and suggest improvements is less well developed.

Information technology

Standards are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils use the word processor competently to record their work.
- Pupils use relevant programs to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills and to present data in simple graphical form.
- Pupils make effective use of art programs to create colourful pictures and patterns and to produce pictures linked to class topics. With support, they have started to input simple text.
- Pupils use listening centres purposefully to listen to stories and music.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' skills are not developing consistently across the competencies as they move through the school.
- The large class sizes and the small number of computers limits the opportunities for pupils to use computers regularly in their work across the curriculum.

History

Standards are good.

Good features

- Pupils are developing an understanding of chronology. They make their own time lines and are able to effectively sequence objects from the past.
- Pupils are developing a good understanding between past and present through visits to places of historical interest and by listening to visitors to school. They are able to ask relevant questions about people and events from the past.
- Pupils use familiar and relevant objects, such as old and new toys, to help them describe change and understand differences in the past.
- Through the story of Jane Pritchard, pupils understand how life used to be in Wales. They readily recall factual information about clothes, homes and toys of the period. They have satisfactory knowledge of people and events in Welsh history and are able to retell the Welsh legend of Gelert.
- Pupils are able to describe the difference between life in a Victorian school and their present day experience. They are beginning to develop an empathy with people from the past.
- Pupils are eager to share their historical awareness through role-play. They are able to offer their own ideas when examining the wide range of historical artefacts available.

- Pupils are able to communicate their findings in the form of pictures and written accounts. The more able are able to write at length and with appropriate understanding.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' awareness of Welsh history generally is less well extended.

Geography

Standards are good.

Good features

- Pupils' mapping skills are good. They can identify and locate features on the simple maps they have made. They can use a key to read a map and can devise their own symbols. Y2 pupils use grid references correctly to locate features.
- Pupils' enquiry skills are good and interpret aerial photographs correctly.
- Pupils use correct geographical vocabulary to describe their observations. More able pupils have a good understanding of directional language.
- Pupils can identify Wales and locate the other countries on a map of the British Isles. Older pupils have an increasing awareness of a contrasting locality through their involvement in projects collecting gifts for children in third world countries. More able pupils can describe different forms of travel.
- Pupils can investigate ways in which their school can be improved and record their observations well in drawings. They have a good awareness of the need to care for the environment and work with the environmental officer on projects designed to eliminate litter.
- More able pupils can compare their village with a seaside location. Pupils benefit from the field trips to places such as Garw Nant Forest Centre and Newton village.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' knowledge of their own locality is limited.

Art

Standards are very good.

Good features

- Pupils work confidently with a wide range of media including paint, pastel, pencil and charcoal. They are encouraged to practise and refine their skills and produce work of a very good standard.
- Pupils are able to mix paint and pastels to gain the desired effect. They can create hues within one colour when painting seascapes.
- Pupils' observational skills and knowledge of line, shape and form develop well. They produce accurate drawings in art lessons and in cross-curricular contexts, using pencils and charcoal effectively to create light and shade.
- Pupils experiment with a range of techniques in two and three dimensions. They are confident with a range of printing techniques and produce collages and texture paintings of a consistently high standard. Pupils handle tools well and work with clay effectively.
- Pupils have the opportunity to study and respond to the work of artists, and visit local exhibitions. They talk confidently about the different styles and how the pictures make them feel.
- Pupils are developing competency using ICT programs to produce pictures.
- Pupils' drawings enhance their work across the curriculum.

Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

Music

Standards are good.

Good features

- Pupils know a range of songs and hymns, which they sing tunefully and with expression.
- All Y2 pupils learn the recorder. They can play simple three and four note tunes and successfully follow musical notation. The more able play with good technique and tone.
- Pupils have a good appreciation of the difference between high and low notes.
- Pupils are able to use a range of untuned percussion instruments effectively. They can select appropriate instruments to accompany a song they have composed about 'Playtime'. They have a good understanding of pulse, beat, duration and dynamics.

- Pupils can record class compositions in the form of a simple graphic score.
- Pupils enthusiastically contribute to whole class music making sessions. They are able to respond to a pupil conductor varying their performance accordingly. They understand musical terminology.
- Pupils' appraisal skills are developing satisfactorily. When listening to the work of famous composers they are able to talk about the mood of the music and how it makes them feel.

Shortcomings

- More able pupils do not use tuned percussion instruments sufficiently.
- Pupils' ability to compose and appraise music is underdeveloped.

Physical Education

Standards are good.

Good features

- Pupils listen attentively and respond accurately to clear instructions. They carry out the tasks enthusiastically.
- Pupils handle equipment correctly and pay careful attention to the need for safety.
- Pupils apply themselves well to warm up and cool down exercises at the beginning and at the end of sessions.
- In gymnastics, pupils make good use of space and are developing effective balance and control of their body movements.
- Pupils perform dance routines effectively in groups. They use their bodies well to interpret the music using a range of movements, with good shape and balance. They make good use of levels. Older pupils enhance their skills by involvement in the extra curricular folk dancing club.
- All pupils dress appropriately for lessons.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' skills in evaluating and improving their performance are less well developed.

Religious Education

Standards are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils' understanding of values, such as friendship, caring for others and caring for the environment, is good.
- Pupils are aware of the importance of rules in their everyday lives.
- Pupils are aware of the main events in the Christian calendar. Appropriate celebrations take place in school at Christmas, Easter and Harvest.
- More able pupils can recall some familiar Bible stories from the old and new testaments and retell them in their own words. They are able to describe the moral relevance of these stories in their own lives.
- Pupils write prayers with sensitivity and thoughtfulness, illustrating a developing sense of social awareness and responsibility.
- Local Christian leaders visit school contributing to the educational experience of the pupils.

Shortcomings

- Pupils have an insecure grasp of the Bible stories they have heard.
- Pupils have limited knowledge and understanding of religious artefacts and ceremonies associated with Christianity and other faiths.
- Pupils have little awareness of how people's religious beliefs affect the way they live.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the last Inspection

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

- The previous report identified the need to address the defects in the building and amend the timing of the school day. The report added that the provision for children under five should be improved and that the SDP should include targets for improving standards. The role of the governing body should have a clearer focus and that staff roles and responsibilities should also be reviewed.
- The school has responded well to the issues raised in the report. The timing of the school day has been changed and on-going improvements are being made to the building. The boundary wall remains in need of attention in order to improve

pupil safety. Job descriptions have been revised following a review of staff roles and responsibilities. A training programme for governors is included as a target in the SDP as are clear targets for improving pupils' standards of achievement. During the current inspection, standards were judged to be good in the majority of subjects.

- The school has reviewed the provision for children under five and there has been considerable investment in facilities and resources. By now, standards are good in most areas of learning. There is a need to review group activities and to extend teacher support and involvement in order to support children's learning.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

The school needs to:

- maintain the good standards and raise standards in those subjects and aspects that are satisfactory by addressing the shortcomings noted;
- to extend pupils' key skills, particularly speaking and ICT, in their work across the curriculum;
- improve the planning and organisation of group activities for nursery children to ensure a clearer focus and more teacher interaction;
- extend the school's self-evaluation process by developing the leadership role of the curriculum co-ordinators;
- implement the proposal to provide a secure boundary wall for the school.

School Data

A. Basic information about the school

School's Name	Cymmer Infant School
Type	LEA maintained/Community
Age range of pupils	3-7 years
School Address	Graigwen Road Cymmer Porth Rhondda Cynon Taff
Postal Code	CF399HA
Telephone number	01443 682481

Name of Headteacher	Mrs J Thomas (Acting)
Date of Appointment	September 2001
Chair of the governors/ The appropriate authority	Mrs M Allen
Registered Inspector	Miss D Morris
Date of Inspection	25-27 November, 2002

B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year Group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	28	30	30	30					118

<i>Number of teachers</i>			
	Full time	Part time	Full time equivalent (FTE)
Number of teachers	6		6

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil : teacher (fte) ratio, excluding nursery and special classes	22 :1
Pupil : adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	9 :1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	25
Teacher : class ratio	1.22 :1

<i>Attendance in percentages for the three terms prior to the inspection.</i>				
	N	R	KS1	Whole School
Spring 2002		93.6	93.3	93.5
Summer 2002		89.8	90.7	90.3
Autumn 2001		92.6	94.0	93.05

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

**NATIONAL CURRICULUM NON STATUTORY ASSESSMENT RESULTS
END OF KEY STAGE 1: 2002**

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2000			Percentage of pupils at each level					
			D	W	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH	Teacher assessment	School			8	62	30	
		National		4	13	62	21	
Reading	Teacher assessment	School			14	54	32	
		National		4	13	54	29	
Writing	Teacher assessment	School		3	5	70	22	
		National		5	13	70	12	
Speaking and Listening	Teacher assessment	School				78	22	
		National		3	11	63	23	
MATHEMATICS	Teacher assessment	School			9	65	32	
		National		2	3	60	29	
SCIENCE	Teacher assessment	School				70	30	
		National		2	10	67	21	

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

In the school:	92%	In Wales:	81%
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- D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements
- W Pupils who are working towards level 1

D. Evidence base of the inspection

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

- 43 teaching periods or part thereof were attended.
- Pupils were questioned about their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.
- Pupils were heard reading and samples of their work were examined.
- The school's documentation was studied including the schemes of work, teachers' planning notes and pupils' assessment records.
- Attendance registers were examined.
- Meetings were held with the head, the staff and the governing body.
- A meeting was held with the parents and the 57 questionnaires returned were analysed.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

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

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