

**Inspection under Section 28 of the
Education Act 2005**

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Cymmer Infants School
Graigwen Road
Cymmer
Porth
CF39 9HA**

School Number: 6742096

Date of Inspection: 06 October 2008

by

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Cymmer Infants 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 Cymmer Infants School took place between 06/10/08 and 07/10/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Ian Kelly 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:

Grade 1	good with outstanding features
Grade 2	good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	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 nursery schools, 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	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
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. Cymmer Infant School is a local authority school, which serves the village of Porth in the Rhondda. The local authority is Rhondda - Cynon - Taff. The school considers its catchment area to be economically disadvantaged and is sited in a Communities First area. At the time of the inspection 36 per cent of the pupils were registered as being entitled to receive free school meals, which is a higher figure than the national average.
2. The school caters for pupils aged three to seven years. At the time of the inspection, there were 91 pupils on roll including 23 full time Nursery children. All pupils are from English speaking homes and Welsh is taught as a second language.
3. The intake reflects the varying socio-economic backgrounds of families. There are 23 pupils on the school's special educational needs register (SEN). There are no pupils with a statement of SEN. Assessments undertaken on entry to the school indicate below average attainments for many children, especially in language skills.
4. The school has successfully gained the following awards since the last Inspection. A renewal of the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People Status, Healthy Schools Award, Active Marc Cymru in P.E., Eco Schools Bronze level.
5. The school's head teacher was appointed in January 2008; she had been the school's acting head teacher since September 2005.
6. The school's vision statement is: 'that we are recognised as a centre where we play and learn together and where staff and children reach their potential.'

The school's priorities and targets

7. The school's current priorities are:
 - To continue to improve the standard of mathematics.
 - To complete Year three of the Healthy Schools Scheme.
 - To improve standards of achievements in English by introducing a new phonics scheme.
 - To continue the implementation of the Foundation Phase.
 - To maintain standards in Welsh oracy.
 - Continuation of the physical education and schools' sports (PESS) initiative.
 - To extend the range of teaching techniques, specifically in encouraging independent learners.
 - To improve standards of achievements in ICT by acquiring the BECTA mark (Becta is the government agency leading the national drive to ensure the effective and innovative use of technology throughout learning).

Summary

8. Cymmer Infants is a good school, which provides a happy, welcoming and caring learning environment for its pupils. There are outstanding features identified in many aspects of the school's provision particularly in the learning experiences provided for all pupils.

Table of grades awarded

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

9. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children are making good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes.
10. Children settle into school quickly and make good and sometimes very good progress, particularly in their personal and social development.
11. Generally, pupils in key stage 1 make very good progress as they move through the school, regardless of their social, linguistic or ethnic background. Most achieve the challenging targets set for them; this is an outstanding feature.
12. Overall the trend in National Curriculum assessment results at the end of Year 2 over several years has shown that the school exceeds both local and national results in all subjects. There was a slight dip in the 2008 results because of a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected level for their age in all three subjects (the Core Subject Indicator) has generally been above national and local averages in four out of the last five years. The school's Core Subject Indicator exceeds the local education authority's Core Subject Indicator by at least 9 per cent each year.
13. When results are compared to similar schools (those within the same free school meal band) they are usually in the top 25 per cent of schools in all three subjects. This has been the case for several years.

14. Pupils' skills in listening are outstanding throughout the school, both when with their teachers and fellow pupils. They also communicate very well when speaking to one another and to adults. Most pupils make good progress in their writing skills, although a few do not write at length. Reading skills are good. Pupils' numeracy skills, information technology skills and problem solving skills are well developed. Their skill of working with others is an outstanding feature; they co-operate, share and support their fellow pupils extremely well.
15. Pupils' bilingual skills and confidence to use Welsh is less well developed. A minority of pupils use the Welsh language voluntarily, but the majority do not use Welsh confidently across the curriculum and in a variety of situations.
16. Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. All pupils very successfully develop their personal values, together with a respect for, and an understanding of, the values of others.
17. Pupils are exceptionally well behaved throughout the school day. They are quiet and attentive during assemblies and move around the school in an orderly manner. Attitudes to work are good. However, pupils' understanding of what they are doing and of what they need to do to improve their work has good features that outweigh shortcomings.
18. Attendance, at just below 92 per cent, in the previous academic year was below the Wales and local authority averages for primary schools.

The quality of education and training

Grades for teaching

19. The quality of education was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
14%	86%	0%	0%	0%

20. These figures compare very favourably with the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in his annual report 2006-2007. Nationally, the quality of teaching is good or better (grades 1 and 2) in 80 per cent of lessons and outstanding (grade 1) in 14 per cent of lessons.
21. The outstanding features include:
 - excellent relationships between staff and pupils in the classroom
 - excellent pace to the teaching throughout lessons
 - highly effective teaching that demonstrates skill and imagination
 - stimulating activities for all pupils, for example in science pupils had the opportunity to use a large variety of magnets and materials to discover which materials would attract and which would repel
 - the use of excellent questioning and evaluative strategies with pupils in order that they reflect and understand how to improve in their work.

22. Pupils of all ages are well stimulated, motivated and challenged. The work set develops pupils' thinking and teachers consistently use praise and encouragement that helps to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence. However, teachers lack the confidence to sufficiently promote the development of pupils' bilingual skills. Teachers and teaching assistants have very good working relationships with the pupils which fosters effective learning.
23. The school's arrangement for assessing and recording pupils' progress is good. Lesson planning clearly identifies opportunities for assessing pupils' progress in relation to the learning objectives. Teachers use criteria to measure success, evaluate progress and inform future planning well. Marking celebrates the good work of pupils, however feedback to pupils and the next steps in learning are not always shared with them, but this is still in its early stages of development.
24. The curriculum is rich and vibrant, fully complies with statutory requirements, and equal access is provided to a broad and well-balanced range of learning experiences that are relevant to the needs and abilities of pupils; this is an outstanding feature. The school has actively and enthusiastically promoted the implementation of the Foundation Phase, which operates very effectively in the nursery and reception classes. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' personal and social education. The coverage of themes is successfully integrated throughout the curriculum and there are frequent opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for others and for themselves. Members of the school council show remarkable maturity in the manner in which they conduct themselves.
25. The way the school plans and manages its arrangements for the care and well being of its pupils is an outstanding feature of the school, leading to them receiving personal support and guidance of the highest quality. There is a very effective system for the induction of pupils to the school. Staff visit the feeder playgroups and prospective pupils and their parents attend the school several times prior to arrival. The school has very clear procedures for ensuring the security and safety of its pupils in the school. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Attendance is monitored thoroughly, but arrangements to encourage those families of pupils whose attendance is higher than 80 per cent, but still below an acceptable level, are less effective.

Leadership and management

26. The head teacher leads and manages the school in a calm and assured manner. She provides positive leadership and sense of direction. There is a very open culture in the school which establishes trust and also encourages self reflection. There is good collaboration, relationships and a sense of partnership between all. The school also has a clear set of aims that reflect its caring ethos and promotes equality for all. The governors provide good support to the school and help to set its strategic direction well.

27. The school's self-evaluation arrangements are good. The self-evaluation report, which is based on a good range of supporting evidence, provides relevant information and detailed analysis of all aspects of school life. The school is very well staffed with an effective team of qualified, experienced and specialist teachers. Staff are very effectively managed and deployed to enhance teaching and learning.
28. The accommodation is good. School buildings are well maintained and effective use is made of all available facilities and space. Several developments both internally and externally have improved the provision for the pupils.
29. The head teacher and governors regularly monitor the work of the school to ensure that spending decisions are matched to the school's priorities.
30. The school provides good value for money.

Recommendations

31. In order to improve further the school should:
- R1 Work in conjunction with parents to improve the attendance of pupils.
 - R2 Continue to develop strategies to improve pupils' bilingual skills and confidence to use incidental Welsh on a regular basis.
 - R3 Continue to develop pupils' involvement in their own learning so they clearly understand what they have to do in order to improve their work.

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

32. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
33. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children are making good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. Children's attainment on entry is very variable, but below average overall, especially in language skills. A minority have language skills which are well below average
34. Children settle into school quickly. Assessments conducted in the Early Years indicate that most children make good and sometimes very good progress, particularly in their personal and social development. Most make good progress in their early reading, writing and numeracy skills. Their listening skills are outstanding.
35. The rate of progress made as pupils move through the school is generally very good. The majority of pupils including those with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their individual needs and abilities. Most pupils, regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background achieve the challenging targets set for them. This is an outstanding feature.
36. Overall the trend in National Curriculum assessment results at the end of Year 2, over several years, shows that the school exceeds both local and national results in all three subjects. There was a slight dip in the 2008 results because of a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected level for their age in all three subjects (the Core Subject Indicator) has generally been above national and local averages in four out of the last five years. The school's Core Subject Indicator exceeds the local education authority's Core Subject Indicator by at least 9 per cent each year.
37. When results are compared to similar schools (those within the same free school meal band) they are usually in the top 25 per cent of schools in all three subjects. This has been the case for several years.
38. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good in relation to their individual needs. There is no overall pattern in the performance of boys and girls; this varies dependent upon the cohort.
39. Pupils' skills in listening are outstanding throughout the school, both when with their teachers and fellow pupils. They also communicate very well when speaking to one another and to adults. Most pupils make good progress in their writing skills, although a few pupils do not write at sufficient length. Most

pupils' reading skills are good. Many pupils in Year 2 read well and with confidence.

40. Pupils' ability in bilingual confidence is less well developed. Overall pupils' progress and standards have good features that outweigh shortcomings. A minority of pupils use the Welsh language voluntarily, but the majority do not use Welsh confidently in subjects and situations across the curriculum.
41. Pupils' numeracy skills, information technology skills and problem solving skills are well developed. Their skill of working with others is an outstanding feature; they co-operate, share and support their fellow pupils extremely well.
42. Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. All pupils very successfully develop their personal values, together with a respect for, and an understanding of, the values of others. They are very enthusiastic to broaden and develop their own understanding of moral and social issues and they demonstrate exemplary levels of tolerance, honesty and fair play.
43. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Virtually all pupils are well motivated and eager to participate in class discussions and to respond to teachers' questions. Almost all tackle their work logically, making good use of their time, and they seek ways to overcome difficulties that arise. They show good capacity to work independently and the vast majority respond well to challenges.
44. Pupils understanding of what they are doing, and of what they need to do to improve their work has good features, which outweigh shortcomings. They have a growing knowledge of their learning targets, but only a minority understand how to improve, gained from the comments provided by the marking of their work.
45. All pupils are exceptionally well behaved throughout the school day; this is an outstanding feature. They are quiet and attentive during assemblies and move around the school in a very orderly manner. At lunch and break times they play happily with one another and there is no evidence of inappropriate behaviour disrupting lessons. There were no exclusions of pupils during the previous year.
46. Pupils clearly understand what is expected of them in terms of the way they relate to each other and adults within the school. They treat staff and visitors with the utmost courtesy and get on exceptionally well with each other at work and play.
47. Attendance, at just below 92 per cent, in the previous academic year was below the Wales and local authority averages for primary schools. However, it was higher than that for similar schools as determined by the level of free school meals in the school. Most pupils arrive promptly at the beginning of the school day.

48. Nearly all pupils have an exemplary understanding of equal opportunity issues because the concept is firmly embedded in the culture of the school. Pupils with additional needs demonstrate that they are fully included in all aspects of school life. Through their work in many subjects and areas of learning, pupils become very aware of other beliefs, cultures and faiths and they display very high levels of respect for those from other backgrounds.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

50. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
14%	86%	0%	0%	0%

51. The quality of teaching was at least good with no important shortcomings (ESTYN Grade 2) in all lessons observed.

52. These figures compare very favourably with the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in his annual report 2006-2007. Nationally, the quality of teaching is good or better (grade 1 and 2) in 80 per cent of lessons and outstanding (grade 1) in 14 per cent of lessons.

53. The outstanding features include:

- excellent relationships between staff and pupils in the classroom,
- excellent pace to the teaching throughout lessons,
- highly effective teaching that demonstrates skill and imagination,
- stimulating activities for all pupils, and very good use of resources, for example in science pupils had the opportunity to use a large variety of magnets and materials to discover which materials would attract and which would repel,
- the use of excellent questioning and evaluative strategies that enables pupils to reflect and understand how to improve in their work.

54. Where teaching is good with no important shortcomings, features include:

- clear concise learning objectives,
- good detail in planning relating to skills needing to be developed,
- sound links to previous learning,
- very good use of resources,
- very good differentiation with a good level of challenge for pupils.

55. Pupils of all ages are well stimulated, motivated and challenged. The work set develops pupils' thinking and teachers consistently use praise and encouragement that helps to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Teachers and support staff have very good working relationships with the pupils which fosters effective learning. There are high expectations and a genuine culture of mutual and total respect. A range of teaching strategies are used appropriately to ensure that the pupils apply themselves to their work.

56. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and most lesson plans include appropriate learning objectives that are shared with pupils. Teacher's planning also includes a focus on the development of the new skills' curriculum and there is a clear emphasis on the skills to be taught; this is a very good feature. Planning for teaching assistants is also clear, logical and detailed to ensure consistency of practice.
57. Teaching assistants are capable, knowledgeable and very effective in their work and support. Their contribution is highly valued; they work well, show initiative and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
58. Very good use is made of interactive white boards to stimulate pupils' interest and improve their ICT skills. Pupils also have many opportunities in lessons to develop other ICT skills through the use of digital video cameras, hand held digital cameras and programmable toys. Other basic skills are equally well promoted. However bilingual teaching is inconsistent and at times staff lack the confidence to sufficiently promote the development of pupils' skills in this area.
59. Pupils' are given good opportunities to work independently, in pairs, groups or all together. Pupil management is consistently very good throughout the school. Teachers actively address the issues of gender, race and ability and promote equality of opportunity for all. They discourage stereotypical images.
60. The school's arrangement for assessing and recording pupils' progress is good and arrangements meet statutory requirements. Lesson planning clearly identifies opportunities for assessing pupils' progress in relation to the learning objectives. Teachers use criteria to measure success, evaluate progress and inform future planning well.
61. Thorough procedures are in place to track the progress of individual pupils throughout their time at the school. Effective use is made of data and analysis of assessment findings to inform target setting and priorities to raise standards. The school shares information on pupils' achievement with those that have a vested interest, such as parents and the Governing Body.
62. Marking celebrates the good work of pupils, however feedback to pupils and the next steps in learning are not always made consistently clear in all classes. Pupil targets are in place and are shared with them, but this is still in its early stages of development.
63. Parents are well informed about their child's progress. They receive information through newsletters, information sessions and notebooks. The school also has an open door policy where parents can discuss their child's progress with staff. Formal open evenings are held in the summer term to discuss the end of year report and progress made. Pupil reports clearly describe pupil's achievements and celebrate their progress, however, more detailed information of ways to improve and future targets in the three core curriculum subjects are not included.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

64. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
65. The overall quality, nature and richness of the learning experiences are outstanding features of the school's provision. Particular features include very effective planning to promote basic and key skills and the provision to promote learners' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's partnership with the community and other institutions is outstanding.
66. The curriculum fully complies with statutory requirements, and equal access is provided to a broad and well-balanced range of learning experiences that are relevant to the needs and abilities of pupils. Knowledge and understanding are developed very well throughout the rich curriculum and the provision builds very effectively on the well-developed skills that the vast majority of pupils already possess. This is an outstanding feature.
67. The school has actively and enthusiastically promoted the implementation of the Foundation Phase, which operates very effectively in the nursery and reception classes. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children are making good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes.
68. Across the school year, an appropriate amount of time is given to each subject. The overall framework for the curriculum includes detailed long- and medium-term planning. This promotes breadth, progression and continuity in pupils' learning very well. The implementation of schemes of work is kept carefully under review and the school is developing its provision further to ensure that a skills-based curriculum is implemented effectively at key stage 1.
69. There are very effective strategies in place to map opportunities to develop the key skills in all subjects, and the school has clear plans to develop these still further in the near future. The integrated approach is having a marked impact on pupils' achievement, apart from their overall progress in Welsh and bilingual skills.
70. Curricular provision emphasises the importance of learning from first-hand experience. Very well planned visits to places of educational interest, such as in history, geography and science, have a significant impact on the standards achieved. The provision is also enriched by the contribution of visitors to the school, which include both individuals and educational groups.

71. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and these broaden learners' experiences and make a significant contribution to the holistic development of each pupil.
72. The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development: this is an outstanding feature. Collective worship fully meets statutory requirements. The school has created an ethos in which the vast majority of pupils enjoy their time in school. This is reflected in the way in which pupils work together and show mutual respect. The very strong emphasis placed upon ensuring that pupils are polite to one another and to members of staff and visitors is an outstanding feature. Personal responsibility, making choices and service to others are examples of themes that encourage social, moral and spiritual development.
73. The school very effectively promotes an appreciation of other cultures, particularly through art and geography. The flourishing links developed with a primary school in Uganda, for example, give pupils a very good insight into the life and work of children on another continent and how global forces shape their lives.
74. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' personal and social education. The coverage of themes is successfully integrated throughout the curriculum and there are frequent opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for others and for themselves.
75. Visitors, from occupations such as nursing, police and fire services and dentistry, help introduce pupils to the world of work. The school also has links with outside organisations through the Education Business Partnership (EBP). However, teachers do not pursue commercial placements and consequently have limited opportunities to use such links to influence their teaching and the learning experiences of their pupils.
76. The quality of the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is good. The Welsh heritage is actively promoted in such areas as history, art and geography. Overall, however, good features outweigh shortcomings in relation to the promotion of pupils' Welsh and bilingual skills.
77. The school ensures all pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum, after school clubs and out-of-school activities while RAISE (Raising Attainment and Individual Standards in Education in Wales) funds are utilised very effectively to support disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1. There are good links with a range of outside agencies to support those pupils with special educational needs. The school challenges behaviour stereotyping through the examples set by adults in their words and actions and during personal and social education (PSE) lessons.
78. The school is doing much to promote an awareness of the importance of the sustainable development of the environment amongst its pupils. It has various recycling schemes and uses the school garden to encourage wildlife. The Nursery is particularly involved in the growth of fruit and vegetables. There is

an Eco Council, although this has only just been set up, and the school has achieved the Eco Schools bronze award. However, this aspect of education has yet to be embedded across a range of subjects. Also, the school has yet to fully address how it can operate in a more sustainable way through saving energy and minimising waste.

79. The school is providing its pupils with exceptional opportunities to develop the entrepreneurial skills they will need later in life. During lessons they are often divided into mixed ability groups and assigned specific roles normally found in committees. Here they address situations, exercises or projects by utilising the skills of negotiation, problem-solving, decision-making and team-working. Also, members of the school council have the opportunity to decide on how to spend a budget and even contribute to this by organising and running a stall at the summer fair.
80. With very few exceptions, parents are very supportive of the school and are pleased with the standards their children achieve in a caring, supportive environment. Parents and friends make a valuable contribution to the life and work of the school; many give freely of their time helping out in the classroom, accompanying pupils on educational visits, supporting school activities and in fund-raising for the school. Their contributions have a positive impact on pupils' standards of achievement and their commitment and support is greatly valued by the head teacher and staff.
81. Communication with parents is very well established, and parents have ready access to the head teacher, deputy head teacher and staff. Regular newsletters, a useful prospectus, and daily, informal contact keep parents well informed about the life and work of the school. A constructive home/school agreement is in place that has readily been accepted by most parents.
82. The school enjoys excellent working partnerships with other schools in its 'cluster' of schools, especially with the main secondary school to which pupils transfer. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils are very good and ensure that year 2 pupils look forward to the junior school with confidence. Pastoral and curriculum links are very well established and effective and help promote continuity of education as pupils move from key stage 1 to key stage 2.
83. The school has established very productive partnerships with an institute of higher education and provides training facilities for student teachers and students undertaking vocational qualifications. Students are carefully mentored and well supported by staff, and they make a positive contribution to the life and work of the school.
84. The school's partnership with the local community is highly productive. Teachers take full advantage of all that the locality has to offer to broaden and enrich the learning experiences of pupils. The school and its various activities are very well supported and valued by the local community.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

85. The findings of the inspection team do not match the grade 1 judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report. Although outstanding features were identified, these were insufficient to award a grade 1 overall.
86. The school works very well with its parents and carers in the care, support and guidance of their children. Parents are very appreciative of the efforts made in this area. Their views are sought on an informal and formal basis through surveys, a suggestion box and parents' meetings. This does bring about change such as in the arrangements at the beginning of the day during wet weather. The well established school council are influential in making decisions that affect the daily lives of pupils.
87. The way the school plans and manages its arrangements for the care of its pupils is an outstanding feature of the school, leading to them receiving personal support and guidance of the highest quality. Each child is assessed as to his or her individual needs on joining the school and plans made to address them, which are subject to ongoing review and modification. The team of teaching assistants is extremely influential in this process. They are fully involved in the planning and assessment of pupils' personal and academic development; a role they fulfil in a very professional and conscientious manner. Parents and pupils are very appreciative of the level of personal support and guidance provided by the school.
88. There is a very effective system for the induction of pupils to the school. Staff visit the feeder playgroups and prospective pupils and their parents attend the school several times prior to arrival. The head teacher has discussions with parents and the Nursery teacher introduces them to the 'play led approach' the school promotes. On arrival, the pupils are assigned older colleagues as 'buddies'. Parents and pupils are appreciative of the school's commitment to ensuring those joining the school settle in as quickly and contentedly as possible.
89. The school has a clear system for promoting the behaviour of its pupils. It also monitors attendance thoroughly, specifically targeting those with less than 80 per cent attendance in conjunction with the education welfare service. However, arrangements are less effective to encourage those families of pupils whose attendance is higher than this but still below an acceptable level.
90. The school has very clear procedures for ensuring the security and safety of its pupils in the school, which are very well implemented by the site manager in conjunction with the head teacher. Risk assessments are carried out for all outside visits and have also been completed for every area of activity in the new Foundation Phase programme. There are two qualified first aiders and the resources available to them are appropriate.

91. The school does much to encourage its pupils to develop a healthy lifestyle. Its breakfast club ensures those who attend have a healthy start to the day and the head teacher has encouraged parents to provide more healthy packed lunches with increasing success. Fruit is provided for pupils, as part of the Healthy Schools Scheme, and they have ready access to water fountains around the school. Dental health is also promoted well through the brushing of teeth after lunch. Exercise is also encouraged with, among other things, after-school games and folk dance clubs. The school's Food and Fitness Policy is an impressive document involving curriculum provision, the school environment and community involvement.
92. The head teacher is the fully qualified child protection officer administering a system in line with the local authority procedures. The deputy head teacher is trained to take over in her absence and all members of staff receive training in this area. They are aware of how to identify and respond to any concerns and who to contact to raise them. Arrangements meet all the most recent guidelines.
93. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good with no important shortcomings. The school's policy complies with the Code of Practice. The inclusive nature of the school ensures that pupils with additional needs are very well supported by all staff. The school works closely with a range of external agencies to ensure pupils receive appropriate support.
94. Pupils with additional learning needs receive good support in lessons through appropriate differentiated tasks and also when they are withdrawn to work in small group outside the classroom. Trained staff support pupils very well and some small group strategies such as *Catch Up* and *Spotlight Maths* have a positive impact upon pupils' progress and achievements.
95. Early identification of pupils with special educational needs is firmly established in the school. Good procedures for pupil tracking enables targeted provision to be made quickly and effectively; this tracking process also shows that pupils with SEN make good progress.
96. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) have challenging and achievable targets. Termly reviews of Individual Education Plans are held. Parents are consulted accordingly.
97. The quality of provision for equal opportunities is good and the commitment to the social inclusion of all pupils permeates the school's life and work. The school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to participate in lessons and school activities, and stereotypical views are challenged effectively.
98. Gender equality is promoted well. Mixed team games, extra-curricular activities and mixed gender groups in the classroom help promote equality and challenge stereotypical views.
99. Good race relations are promoted throughout the school and the whole school community values and celebrates individuality and diversity. Good quality

statutory documentation underpins this good practice. Equality for all is firmly embedded in the school's ethos and pupils value and respect the contribution of others regardless of their background, ability, gender or race.

100. The school has made all reasonable arrangements to secure the equal treatment of disabled pupils and to welcome disabled visitors to the school. Good quality documentation, including a clear accessibility plan and disability equality scheme, demonstrate clearly how staff will continue to improve access to the curriculum, physical access and the provision of information for disabled persons.
101. The measures taken by the school to eliminate oppressive behaviour, including racial discrimination, bullying and all other forms of harassment, are outstanding. School records show such incidents are very rare and the school functions extremely well as an inclusive, happy and supportive community where all pupils are valued as individuals.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

102. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
103. Cymmer Infants School successfully fulfils its motto of 'playing and learning together'. It has a clear set of aims that reflect the caring ethos and promotes equality for all. The head teacher and governors are committed to the continued success of the school.
104. The head teacher leads and manages the school in a calm and assured manner. She provides positive leadership and has a clear sense of direction. There is a very open culture in the school which establishes trust and also encourages self reflection. There is good collaboration, relationships and a real sense of partnership between all. She is ably supported by the acting deputy head teacher. These are outstanding features that underpin the success of the school.
105. The quality of curriculum leadership is good and all members of staff have appropriate responsibilities. Their subject knowledge is good and they monitor and evaluate standards effectively. This is reflected in the good standards achieved by pupils.
106. The school is focussing well on national and local priorities. The introduction of the Foundation Phase has been well prepared. The school manages a successful breakfast club that runs each morning. The school is actively involved in the physical education and schools' sports (PESS) initiative and are also working towards the BECTA quality mark and the Healthy Schools award.
107. The voice of the pupils is effectively heard through the school council. It is seen as a forum for discussing ideas, aspirations and concerns of the young people.
108. Good links are established with neighbouring schools and the local cluster group meet regularly to share practice and agree new policies, for example the cluster schools' marking policy.
109. The school has a good range of policies and documentation to support teaching and learning in the school. There are also many detailed non-curricular policies taken from the good practice at the school, which ensure clarity and consistency.
110. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the performance management for staff. The school ensures that staff have appropriate support and training to meet

their needs and are clearly linked to school priorities. The positive outcome of this training is clear to see in the day to day practice in many areas of school life.

111. The governing body is very committed and has a good awareness of its responsibilities. They are fully aware of the content of the School Development Plan and make a good contribution to setting the direction for the school.
112. The governing body meets all its statutory responsibilities.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

113. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement of the school in its self-evaluation report.
114. The school's self-evaluation report, which was prepared before the inspection, addresses each of the seven key questions of the Estyn inspection framework and provides a clear summary of the school's priorities, strengths and areas for development. The self-evaluation report, which is based on a good range of supporting evidence, provides relevant information and detailed analysis of all aspects of school life.
115. The inspection team matched the judgements of the school in six of the seven key questions. Where the inspection team awarded a lower grade, many good features were identified but there were insufficient outstanding features to award a grade 1 for the question overall.
116. The head teacher and members of staff are committed to further school improvement and display a commendable determination to achieve high standards in all aspects of school life. A culture of self-evaluation is embedded in the school and the cycle of school improvement is well established. Self-evaluation and the drive for continuous improvements are notable features of the school.
117. All members of staff are involved in the process of school review and in identifying whole-school priorities as set out in the School Development Plan. The monitoring role of the head teacher and deputy head is well established. They are an enthusiastic team and they focus sharply on school improvement, ensuring that relevant actions are taken to support progress and raise standards.
118. All subject leaders are required to carry out reviews of their subjects and to produce action plans, which are monitored and evaluated as part of the monitoring cycle. Subject leaders carefully monitor teaching and learning and,

as a result, the head teacher and deputy have a very accurate picture of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school.

119. The school carefully analyses relevant data, including teacher assessments. The governing body is kept well informed about standards and they receive regular reports from the head teacher. Governors are provided with detailed information so that they can compare the school's performance with other schools.
120. The views of pupils, parents and other interested parties are regularly sought and they are fully taken into account in school planning. Pupils confirm that they are listened to carefully and that there have been improvements as a result.
121. The school's detailed plans for improvement and focused priorities are set out in the School Development Plan, which is a useful working document with specific and measurable success criteria. The school improvement cycle is very closely linked to the self-evaluation process. The school can show that there have been measurable improvements and good progress in many areas since the last inspection.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

122. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
123. The school is very well staffed with an effective team of qualified, experienced and specialist teachers. Staff are very effectively managed and deployed to enhance teaching and learning.
124. The good quality of pupil support provided by dedicated teaching assistants is a strength of the school. They are deployed well and their experience and expertise has enabled the school to plan its initiatives effectively.
125. The school uses its resources for workforce remodelling well. There are suitable arrangements in place to provide all members of staff with the required preparation, planning and assessment time and good use is made of this. The management of this has had a positive effect on standards throughout the school.
126. The school has an extremely effective professional development strategy that links closely to its priorities for improvement and staff's own performance management. Staff are well trained and take part in relevant and appropriate professional development. Teachers undertake relevant in-service courses to improve their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Teaching assistants have benefited from accredited courses of various kinds. Teachers and classroom support assistants work together extremely well as a team to

provide a good quality education; for example their use of pupil progress notebooks and focussed tasks with pupils ensures effective communication and consistency of practice. This is an outstanding feature.

127. Volunteers and parents make an active contribution to the life of the school. Regular volunteers support pupils in a variety of ways, for example in support for reading and mathematics. Whilst the school also provides support for parents in classes that encourage and develop parents' skills in Information Communication Technology.
128. The school administrator carries out the daily routines effectively and efficiently. The canteen staff, midday supervisors, cleaner and caretaker all make significant contributions to the efficiency of the school and to the sense of community. All staff take a great pride in the school and their pleasant demeanour contributes to the positive culture within the school.
129. Learning resources are of good quality and readily accessible to staff and pupils. Recent acquisitions are in line with school priorities and suited to the age, ability and educational needs of pupils. Very attractive displays in classrooms and corridors are used effectively as teaching resources. Good use is made of human resources from outside the school, for example, in the teaching of creative skills.
130. The accommodation is good. School buildings are well maintained and effective use is made of all available facilities and space. Several developments both internally and externally have improved the provision for the pupils. The school garden and the development of the outside of the building to create attractive areas for pupils is an ongoing priority.
131. The main parts of the school site are secure, all gates are closed and external doors to the school buildings are locked during the school day. Pupils' toilets are due to be refurbished in the near future and this will certainly improve the quality of the facilities.
132. The head teacher and governors regularly monitor the work of the school to ensure that spending decisions are matched to the school's priorities. Subject leaders regularly review resources for their own subject areas. The school makes efficient and effective use of available finances. The school has gained a significant number of grants from outside agencies and these, along with monies raised by friends and parents of the school, have been put to good use.
133. The school provides good value for money.

School's response to the inspection

The staff would like to thank the Inspection Team for the positive and courteous way they conducted the inspection. It was a very positive report that will be used as the basis to move the school forward to the next stage of development.

The Governing Body and staff are pleased that the Inspectors, led by Mr Ian Kelly, recognised that the standards achieved by the learners and the quality of teaching in the school have many outstanding features. It was particularly pleasing to note that the pupils' behaviour was exceptionally good and that they were able to co-operate, share and support their fellow pupils well. We take pride in the fact that the school very successfully fulfils its role in working with the community.

As a Foundation Phase school, we welcomed the Inspectors' comments in describing the school as having actively and enthusiastically promoted the implementation of the Foundation Phase in both nursery and reception classes. In addition pupils in Key Stage 1 generally make very good progress which is reflected in the schools consistent position in the top 25 per cent, when compared to similar schools and by the fact that they regularly exceed the Core Subject Indicator by at least 9 percent.

An action plan will be put in place to address the recommendations, two of which have already been identified in the School Development Plans. A copy will be sent to all parents and comments on its progress will be included in the Governors Annual Report.



Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Cymmer Infants School
School type	Nursery and Infant
Age-range of pupils	3 – 7 years
Address of school	Graigwen Road, Cymmer, Porth, RCT
Postcode	CF39 9HA
Telephone number	01443 682481

Head teacher	Mrs Marion Cage
Date of appointment	23 rd January 2008
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs Marilyn Allen
Registered inspector	Mr Ian Kelly
Dates of inspection	6 th and 7 th October 2008

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	23	25	20	23					91

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	4	1	0.8

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	
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	23
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Autumn 07	86%	89%	92%
Spring 08	87%	87%	94%
Summer 08.	80%	87%	89%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	39%
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 2008			Number of pupils in Y2:				
			29				
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
English:	Teacher assessment	School		4	11	74	11
		National		3	14	63	20
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School		11	19	59	11
		National		4	15	55	26
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School		11	4	74	11
		National		5	16	67	11
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School		0	7	85	7
		National		2	11	64	23
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School		7	7	70	15
		National		2	11	65	22
Science	Teacher assessment	School		7	7	59	26
		National		1	9	66	24

- D Pupils who are excepted or disapplied under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
- W Pupils working towards level 1

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

A team of three inspectors visited the school over five inspector days.

The head teacher was a nominee and played a supportive and active role during the inspection.

Pre-inspection meetings were held with staff, the governing body, the local education authority and parents to discuss the life and work of the school.

Twenty-eight questionnaires were completed and returned by parents and carefully analysed by the inspection team.

During the inspection, discussions were held with the head teacher, teachers, support staff and pupils about their work and the life of the school.

Fourteen lessons were observed.

Samples of pupils' work, practical and written, from across the ability range in each year group were examined.

Pupils' behaviour was observed at various times throughout the school day.

Inspectors attended the acts of worship.

Any documentation presented to the school prior to and during the inspection was analysed.

Post inspection meetings were held with the head teacher, staff and governing body to discuss the outcomes of the inspection.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr Ian Kelly Registered Inspector	Key Questions 1, 2 and 5
Dr David Evans Team Inspector	Key Questions 3, 4, 6 and 7
Mr Ted Tipper Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3 and 4.
Mrs Marion Cage Nominee	Supporting evidence in all Key Questions.

The contractor was:

Evenlode Education Ltd
Little Garth
St John's Close
Hawarden
Flintshire
CH5 1QJ

Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, the head teacher, the staff, pupils and parents/carers for their co-operation during the inspection.