

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

**Ysgol Gymraeg Rhyd y Grug
Quakers Yard
Treharris
Merthyr
CF46 5AW**

School Number: 675/1437

Date of Inspection: July 4th-7th 2005

by

**Mrs Eleri Betts
W248/17717**

Date: September 6th 2005

Under Estyn contract number: T/258/04P

© Crown Copyright 2005

This Report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

Ysgol Gymraeg Rhyd y Grug was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose 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 more information about their child's school. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of Ysgol Gymraeg Rhyd y Grug took place between July 4th and 7th 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Mrs Eleri Betts undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This summary report may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes but only as a whole and provided it is reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

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 each inspection a written report is formulated on seven key questions.

For short inspections, there are no subject reports.

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

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

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

This school received a standard inspection.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years 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 attain the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who attain the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The national curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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.

List of abbreviations used in the report in alphabetical order.

ACCAC	Awdurdod Cymhwysterau Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales
EBP	Education Business Partnership
CoP	Code of Practice
GB	Governing Body
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEP	Individual Education Plan
INSET	In-Service Training
KS1	Key Stage 1
KS2	Key Stage 2
NC	National Curriculum
NQT	Newly Qualified Teachers
PSE	Personal and Social Education
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SDP	School Development Plan
SMT	School Management Team
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
Y	Year

Contents	Page
Context	1
Summary	2
Recommendations	10
Standards	11
Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?	11
The quality of education and training	14
Key question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	14
Key question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	16
Key question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	18
Leadership and management	20
Key question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	20
Key question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	21
Key question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	22
Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning	24
Early Years	24
Welsh	29
Mathematics	30
History	31
Geography	33
Art	34
School's response to the inspection	36
Appendices	
A Basic information about the school	37
B School data and indicators	37
C National Curriculum assessments results	38
D Evidence base of the inspection	40
E Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	41

Context

The nature of the provider

1. Ysgol Gymraeg Rhyd y Grug is situated in the village of Quakers Yard near Treharris. The LEA is Merthyr. The main building dates from 1902. It was opened as a Welsh school in 1976 with one class; by today, there are eight classes in the school. A two storey demountable building and another small demountable have been added on the school yard as numbers have increased.
2. Pupils come from the areas of Troed y Rhiw, Aberfan, Merthyr Vale, Edwardsville, Treharris, Quakers Yard, Bedlinog and Trelewis. The school's catchment is in an area of economic disadvantage; a number of villages which feed the school are in receipt of financial aid from the European Social Fund.
3. The majority of pupils receive nursery education either at the school or in nearby nursery groups. There are 186 pupils aged 3-11 at the school at present, a figure which includes 22 full time children in the nursery class. Around 19% of pupils receive free school meals; about 5% come from homes where Welsh is the main language spoken and around 1% are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school notes that 47 pupils are on the SEN register but none is stated.
4. The previous head was absent for a long period of time through illness and for two years an acting head was responsible for the running of the school; a new head was appointed at the beginning of the summer term 2005.
5. The school was last inspected during the summer term, 1999. It was awarded the Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark for Schools in January 2004.
6. The school's motto is 'Gyda'n gilydd croeswn y bont' / 'Together we will cross the bridge'.

The school's priorities and targets

7. The school identifies that its main objectives are to:
 - create a homely, happy, disciplined and challenging environment so that each individual can develop fully through the medium of Welsh;
 - nurture self-esteem, respect for others and for heritage;
 - develop responsible and rounded citizens to meet the challenge of the future;
 - develop each individual to his or her full ability;
 - ensure equal opportunity and make the curriculum child-centred;
 - extend the child's knowledge through a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum;
 - create an environment which promotes independence and confidence;
 - foster an awareness of conservation and preservation of our environment.

8. The school's priorities for the current year are to:

- update the Welsh scheme, improve provision and raise standards of language across the school;
- update the ICT scheme and arrange INSET for staff on new software;
- set targets for basic skills and monitor developments in literacy and numeracy;
- update the design and technology scheme of work;
- establish a School Council;
- improve the school environment and consolidate pupils' awareness of sustainable development and continue with Eco school activities;

Summary

9. The school has a team of committed teachers who have experienced a difficult period because of the instability in the school's leadership and management. They are responding enthusiastically to the new head who, since her appointment at the beginning of the summer term 2005, has provided a clear vision and firm direction to their work. As a result, there has been visible progress in all aspects of life at the school. A very caring ethos and respect for others is evident within the school community.

10. The inspection team agrees with the grades awarded by the school in its self-evaluation document in four of the key questions but has awarded a higher grade in two others and a lower grade in one.

11. The inspection team judged the work of the school as follows:

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 3
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	Grade 2
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	Grade 3
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

Standards

12. Overall, standards in lessons observed are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
8%	78%	14%	-	-

13. For under fives standards across the six areas of learning are as follows:

Nursery

Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 3
Personal and social development	Grade 3
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 3
Creative development	Grade 3

Reception

Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 3
Personal and social development	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2

14. Standards in KS1 and KS2 in the subjects are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Welsh	Grade 2	Grade 2
Mathematics	Grade 2	Grade 2
History	Grade 3	Grade 2
Geography	Grade 3	Grade 2
Art	Grade 3	Grade 1

15. Standards of achievement in lessons are far higher than WAG all-Wales targets for 2007, which are that 98% should be satisfactory or better (Grade 3) and 65% good or better (Grade 2).

16. The educational provision for the under- fives has some weaknesses, but there is evidence that these weaknesses can soon be put right.

17. Pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve good standards particularly in withdrawal sessions where they are taught in small groups.

18. In KS1 from 2001 onwards the Core Subject Indicator, which combines results in Welsh, mathematics and science, has risen consistently and in 2004 it was, for the first time in years, higher than the LEA and national results. In

comparison with other schools the Welsh and science results were above the median and in mathematics they were exactly in line with the median figure.

19. In national test results in 2004 in KS2 the school succeeded in maintaining the consistent improvement achieved during the previous three years. As a result the Core Subject Indicator was significantly higher than the LEA average and slightly above the all-Wales level. In comparison with other similar schools the school was above the median in mathematics and English, below the median in science and in the lowest quartile in Welsh.
20. Pupils' bilingual skills develop well and the school achieves its aim of ensuring that all are bilingual citizens by the age of eleven.
21. For the under fives standards in key skills are good in numeracy and ICT. In literacy, however, although good features outweigh shortcomings, nursery children do not develop communication skills sufficiently across the areas of learning and in the nursery and reception classes, pre-writing skills are not adequately developed.
22. In KS1 and KS2 development in key skills is good overall in literacy and ICT. In numeracy, however, although good features outweigh shortcomings, skills are not developed consistently.
23. Pupils' awareness of equal opportunities is good with outstanding features.
24. Pupils across the school know exactly what they are going to learn as the lesson's outcomes are made clear at the start. They make good progress towards reaching their potential.
25. Overall, pupils' creative skills are good. Much of the work produced in art in KS2 shows outstanding creativity. Younger pupils, however, do not always develop creativity fully as they are not given enough choice of media and completed work is uniform in nature. Pupils' problem solving skills are limited across the school.
26. The under-fives and KS1 pupils develop a good understanding of some jobs which are central to the life of the community. Older pupils realise what work opportunities are available in the local area.
27. Pupils' standard of behaviour is good. They are polite and friendly and older ones are eager to care for those younger than themselves. Pupils of all ages understand that they must respect school rules.
28. Pupils' attitudes towards learning are consistently good; their behaviour has a positive effect on standards of work.
29. Average attendance during the last three terms is 92%.

The Quality of Education and Training.

30. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
24%	56%	20%	-	-

31. Although the school has no teaching and learning policy which would ensure parity of teaching practices within the school, the quality of teaching is a strength and is a key element in the progress made by pupils.
32. The quality of teaching of pupils with SEN is consistently good, and sometimes very good, where there is effective support for pupils within the classroom, or in withdrawal groups.
33. In all lessons there is a clear and consistent focus, with effective revision at the end. Care is taken in planning, with the provision of suitable differentiated tasks.
34. In general, teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and they are aware of recent developments. Their working relationship with pupils is outstanding and they constantly praise individual efforts. ICT is used effectively to enrich teaching.
35. The school's assessment policy is clear, and in general, procedures are effective, especially for pupils with SEN and for the under- fives.
36. Pupils' work is marked regularly although good practice is not consistent across the school; in the best examples, comments offer appropriate guidance on how to improve work.
37. Overall, the school provides a broad and relevant curriculum.
38. For the under-fives, the curriculum is appropriately based on the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. It is presented through relevant themes and there are exciting links between activities in different areas. However, planning for the full cycle of themes has not been completed and the planning work already undertaken has not been evaluated. In the nursery class the provision is too structured on occasions.
39. The curriculum for KS1 and KS2 is delivered in an interesting manner with many opportunities for practical work. However, there is a variation in the effectiveness of schemes of work across the subjects, as a number of them have not been updated. This has a detrimental effect on progression in subjects. During the inspection, work was seen being delivered at the same level to different age classes across the school. The provision for homework is good.
40. Recently the school has moved forward with planning for key skills. These are mapped out and a code is used appropriately to ensure provision.

41. The school responds well to ACCAC guidelines for PSE. The activities of the School Council are an integral part of the provision where pupils are given opportunities to understand their rights and responsibilities.
42. The school is aiming to be recognised as an Eco School and has already won the bronze flag. Clear emphasis is placed on healthy eating, sustainable development, recycling, reducing waste and conserving energy and water.
43. Pupils' cultural development is outstanding. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is an important part of the provision.
44. Visits to a range of places of worship confirm pupils' understanding of other cultures. Respect for and awareness of other languages are given a clear focus at the school.
45. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. School collective worship sessions offer a pleasant ambience of worship in which there is an element of reflection and a clear Christian ethos. These sessions offer pupils good morals. Pupils take on responsibilities enthusiastically. The school's extra-curricular provision is good.
46. Links with parents are good. A home/school contract is in operation. Parents were enthusiastic in their praise for the school in the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting. However, the Governing Body's Annual Report to Parents does not comply fully with statutory requirements.
47. Although there is no policy for partnerships with industry, links are developing appropriately as part of the school's good partnership with its community.
48. Partnerships with other schools are good. The relationship with the secondary school is strong and there is a suitable transition policy as well as effective curricular links. The relationship with Welsh medium schools in the cluster feeding the secondary school and the feeder nursery schools is good, as are the partnerships with English medium schools in the county.
49. The quality of care, support and guidance offered to learners is good. Pupils are extremely happy at the school.
50. Constant attention is given to pupils' personal welfare, and health and safety matters. Good practical steps are taken to ensure pupils' safety whilst at the school and when crossing the bridge to the buses at the start and end of the day.
51. No evidence of bullying was seen during the inspection; the school has clear guidelines for dealing with problems should the need arise. Staff have a good knowledge of the detailed guidelines available to them in the area of child protection. Arrangements for action are well established; the head and deputy are responsible for this area.

52. Policies for sex education and racial equality are firmly established, and are known to all staff. The school effectively promotes equal opportunities for all pupils, including those with physical disabilities, although the classroom upstairs in the double demountable is not appropriate for them.
53. There are very effective procedures in place, such as reward systems, to promote pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem.
54. Provision for pupils with SEN is good, and fully complies with the CoP. Appropriate use is made of standardised tests to identify needs at an early stage. Pupils are well supported by classroom teachers, a specialist teacher, and teachers' aides to achieve targets identified in their IEPs.
55. Effective use is made of external agencies, but there is currently no educational psychologist within the LEA to deal with the particular problems of some pupils with SEN. Where there is close liaison between the school and parents these pupils make good progress.

Leadership and management

56. The last two years has been a very unstable period in the school's leadership and management as a result of the previous head's regular absence through illness.
57. During this period the deputy head played a key role in ensuring that a team spirit exists between teachers; for example, the school took part in a number of national initiatives such as being awarded the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark.
58. Although the new head only started in her role a few weeks prior to the inspection, she has prioritised appropriately. Within a short space of time, she has succeeded in developing a feeling of purpose within the school community. However, performance management procedures are not adequately developed.
59. There are clear shortcomings in the role of subject co-ordinators. Some teachers have changed responsibilities a number of times recently and they are not confident in their duties. They have not had opportunities to monitor learning and teaching in their subjects nor to complete or update schemes of work. A number of them have not received INSET appropriate to their current responsibilities.
60. The GB has a caring and supportive attitude towards the school and the head is eager to use their expertise effectively; as a result they are developing into effective stakeholders in the school's procedures.
61. The self-evaluation document formulated by the head in consultation with teachers is comprehensive and gives a clear and accurate picture of the school's strengths, where improvement is needed and what should be prioritised. The recommendations identified in this report are noted as areas for development in the school documentation.

62. The school responded appropriately to the investigation undertaken by the LEA into the decline in standards following the last inspection, and prioritised accordingly. The SDP identifies the school's priorities appropriately. The school regularly compares its performance with that of other schools.
63. The GB and pupils, through the School Council, are developing their role increasingly in the self-evaluation process; however although parents are very knowledgeable about the school, they have not had an opportunity to have a formal input.
64. Although the school's progress immediately following the last inspection was slow, during the school year 2004-2005 progress has been good.
65. There are enough appropriately qualified teachers to teach all aspects of the curriculum. Their expertise is used well and they exchange classes.
66. Effective use is made of a specialist teacher who supports the language of pupils with SEN. Classroom support staff work extremely well to promote progress amongst pupils in their care.
67. The standard of cleanliness at the school is very good, and the caretaker and ancillary and administrative staff have a good influence on the day to day running of the school.
68. Overall, the school has adequate appropriate resources for all ages though there is a shortage of large equipment in the nursery classroom. The resources are in good condition, and consistent and effective use is made of them during lessons.
69. Very effective use is made of accommodation. Although space is limited, the hall is used successfully for physical education lessons, to hold whole-school assemblies, and to serve lunch. Although the two storey cabin looks unsightly from outside, teachers' care ensures that it is attractive inside. The building, however, limits the school's ability to develop a number of aspects of school life. The LEA itself is critical of the state of the building and recently the school has been involved in consultation discussions regarding moving to another building in 2007.
70. The lively and tasteful displays on classroom walls and in corridors contribute well to creating a pleasant ethos in the school, and are effective learning resources.
71. The school has no playing field, but the yard is marked appropriately for games although the demountable buildings in the yard significantly diminish the playing area and environmental education. There is a purposeful yard for the under-fives. Play areas are safe and appropriate use is made of them.

72. Budgetary control is robust, and the school operates well within its budget. The GB monitors all expenditure effectively and ensures cost-effectiveness. The SDP is used as a tool for budgetary planning for the future.
73. The school provides good value for money.

Recommendations

In order to move the school forward teachers and GB need to:

- R1 raise standards in language, literacy and communication skills, personal and social development, physical development and creative development in the nursery class and in language, literacy and communication skills in the reception class,
- R2 raise standards in history, geography and art in KS1;
- R3 ensure that schemes of work for subjects are complete and are appropriately updated;
- R4 develop the role of the subject co-ordinators and provide opportunities for them to monitor subjects regularly;
- R5 develop performance management procedures;
- R6 continue to develop the self-evaluation process;
- R7 ensure that the content of the GB's annual report to parents complies fully with statutory requirements.

N.B. Recommendations 3-6 are already identified in the self-evaluation report as issues of which the school is aware are in need for improvement.

Standards

Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings.

74. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report as the school awarded a Grade 3 for this question.

75. Overall, standards in lessons observed are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
8%	78%	14%	-	-

76. For under fives standards across the six areas of learning are as follows:

Nursery

Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 3
Personal and social development	Grade 3
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 3
Creative development	Grade 3

Reception

Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 3
Personal and social development	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2

77. Standards in KS1 and KS2 in the subjects are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Welsh	Grade 2	Grade 2
Mathematics	Grade 2	Grade 2
History	Grade 3	Grade 2
Geography	Grade 3	Grade 2
Art	Grade 3	Grade 1

78. Pupils' standards of achievement in lessons are far higher than WAG all-Wales targets for 2007, which are that 98% should be satisfactory or better (Grade 3) and 65% good or better (Grade 2).

79. The educational provision for the under fives has some weaknesses but there is evidence that these weaknesses can soon be put right.
80. Pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve good standards particularly in withdrawal sessions where they are taught in small groups.
81. During the years immediately following the last inspection the school's results were extremely disappointing with the Core Subject Indicator falling significantly in both key stages. In KS1 there were unexpected variances in results with girls' and boys' levels varying to an unreasonable extent. In KS2 during this period there was considerable disparity between teacher assessments and national tests.
82. In KS1 from 2001 onwards however, the Core Subject Indicator, which combines results in Welsh, mathematics and science, has risen consistently and in 2004 it was, for the first time in years, higher than the LEA and national results. In comparison with similar schools the Welsh and science results were above the median and in mathematics they were exactly in line with the median figure. The number of pupils who achieved level three in Welsh and mathematics was below the LEA and national level but above in science.
83. In KS2 national test results in 2004 the school succeeded in maintaining the consistent improvement achieved during the previous three years. As a result the Core Subject Indicator was significantly higher than the LEA and above the all-Wales level. The school was above the median in mathematics and English, below the median in science and in the lowest quartile in Welsh. There was a gradual improvement in level five results in Welsh, English and mathematics but the number of pupils achieving level five in science was below the national average.
84. Pupils' bilingual skills develop well and the school achieves its aim of ensuring all are bilingual citizens by the age of eleven. They can select and translate information from texts in both languages for personal research purposes, particularly when drawing information from the web. Their knowledge of the names of birds and places in both languages is an exceptional element of their learning.
85. For the under-fives standards in key skills are good in numeracy and ICT. Nursery and reception children's skills develop well as they have a variety of opportunities to use number and graphs in different contexts. They develop consistent skills in ICT when playing language and number games. In literacy, however, good features outweigh shortcomings; nursery children do not develop communication skills adequately across the areas of learning and in the nursery and reception classes, pre-writing skills are not developed adequately.
86. In KS1 and KS2 development in key skills is good overall. Pupils develop consistently good skills in listening, speaking and reading in history and geography; they consolidate subject terminology consistently during the plenary session at the end of lessons. Various tasks develop their fluency in writing

across subjects but on occasions over-use of worksheets hampers this. ICT skills across the school develop well and pupils of all ages are very confident in using the interactive whiteboards and the computer. In numeracy, however, although good features outweigh shortcomings, abilities are not developed consistently within the different contexts and skills in recording information in graph form are not extended adequately across the school.

87. Pupils' awareness of equal opportunities is good with outstanding features. The school's community ethos promotes commitment to equality of opportunity for all. Pupils are well guided in considering the importance of this area in global terms for example as they discuss the poverty which affects some people in the world.
88. Pupils across the school know exactly what they are going to learn as the lesson's outcomes are made clear at the start. Overall, they understand the tasks they are expected to undertake and have opportunities to display their work and learn through the activities of others at the end of the session. Generally, they make good progress towards achieving their potential.
89. Overall, pupils' creative skills are good. Much of the work produced in art in KS2 shows outstanding creativity; pupils make sensible choices when selecting media, putting their own interpretation to original work and emulating the style of others. On occasions, however, creativity is hampered in poetry writing by concentrating excessively on the form rather than the sentiments being conveyed. Youngest pupils do not always develop creativity adequately as they are not given enough of a choice of media and completed work is uniform in nature. Pupils' problem solving skills are limited across the school.
90. The under-fives and KS1 pupils develop a good understanding of some jobs central to the life of the community; they understand the main features of the jobs of the nurse and the fireman. Older pupils realise what work opportunities are available in the local area; for example, Y5 spent a morning at a supermarket learning about the different jobs available there, as well as learning about the importance of aspects such as hygiene and health and safety.
91. Pupils' standard of behaviour is good in collective worship sessions, in class, during break times and as they move around the school. They are polite and friendly and the older girls show particular maturity in their behaviour. Pupils play and work together happily and take pride in each other's success when they are praised in collective worship sessions and when sharing experiences in the classroom. Older ones are keen to take care of those younger than themselves and those of all ages understand the need to respect school rules.
92. Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are consistently good; their behaviour has a positive impact on standards. They are eager to do their best and please. Although the noise level sometimes rises in classes it is, overall, a reflection of the work ethos of the classroom; pupils keep on task almost without exception.

93. The average attendance during the last three terms is 92%. Unauthorised absences are low. Registers are correct on the whole and the school has a clear policy in this respect. Although the school suggests that the late arrival of some pupils is a matter for concern, no evidence was seen in registers or during the inspection that this was a real problem.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

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

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

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
24%	56%	20%	-	-

96. Although the school has no teaching and learning policy which would ensure parity of teaching practices within the school, the quality of teaching is a strength and a key element in the progress made by pupils.
97. The quality of teaching of pupils with SEN is consistently good, and sometimes very good, where there is effective support for pupils within the classroom, or in withdrawal groups. The high percentage of outstanding teaching is in Y5 and Y1.
98. In all lessons there is a clear and consistent focus and revision at the end is effective. Care is taken over planning with the provision of suitably differentiated tasks.
99. In general, teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, and they are aware of recent developments. Their working relationship with pupils is outstanding and they constantly praise individual efforts. ICT is used effectively to enrich teaching.
100. In around a quarter of lessons observed, there are outstanding features in teaching which include:
- high expectations in terms of work and behaviour;
 - lively presentations;
 - challenging pace and
 - purposeful use of various techniques and teaching methods.

101. Where there are some shortcomings in teaching:

- presentations at the beginning of lessons are too long;
- pace of the lesson is unsuitable and
- technical terms are used incorrectly in some areas.

102. Teachers use various teaching methods to consolidate and reinforce pupils' bilingual fluency, using effective techniques to extend their skills in Welsh and English.

103. The school's assessment policy is clear and in general procedures are effective. Teachers know their pupils very well and the quality of assessment is good. Assessments are correct and consistent, and fully meet statutory requirements, including those for pupils with SEN.

104. The quality of assessment undertaken in the nursery class, and baseline assessment in the reception class, are good.

105. Pupils' work is marked regularly, although good practice is not consistent across the school; in the best examples, comments provide appropriate guidance on how to improve work.

106. Pupils' progress is recorded consistently and detailed reading records are kept. There is a suitable assessment timetable for core subjects with work being assessed termly. Assessment of foundation subjects is more informal.

107. Pupils have personal targets in language and mathematics. Discussions are held between teachers and pupils to agree on realistic targets ensuring pupils play an active part in the assessment process; this is very good practice.

108. The IEPs of pupils with SEN include language targets; individual pupils are aware of their targets, and try hard to achieve them.

109. Effective use is made of national test results and teacher assessments to steer priorities in planning.

110. Portfolios of work are used effectively in a number of areas to moderate assessments.

111. Annual reports to parents comply with statutory requirements. They provide a clear picture of pupils' achievements and skills in all subjects and offer valuable comments regarding social development and successes and how to improve work.

112. Parents are happy with the system of visiting the school three times a year to discuss their children's progress with teachers. However, a high proportion of parents of pupils with SEN do not take advantage of the opportunity to discuss their children's work with the specialist teacher during these evenings.

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

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

113. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report, as the school awarded itself a Grade 2 for this key question.
114. Overall, the school provides a broad and relevant curriculum.
115. For the under fives, the curriculum is appropriately based on the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. It is presented through relevant themes and there are exciting links between activities in different areas. However, planning for the full cycle of themes has not been completed and the planning work already undertaken has not been evaluated. In the nursery class the provision is too structured on occasions.
116. The curriculum for KS1 and KS2 is delivered in an interesting manner with many opportunities for practical work. Differentiation is a clear element of class and work and individual activities are planned well. However, there is a variation in the effectiveness of schemes of work across the subjects as a number of them have not been updated. This has a detrimental effect on progression in subjects. During the inspection work was seen being delivered at the same level to different age classes across the school.
117. Recently, the school has moved forward in planning for key skills. These are mapped out and a code is used appropriately to ensure provision. A policy has recently been formulated. However, the school is not wholly effective in its delivery of these skills as there are inconsistencies and, on occasions, a lack of progression, particularly in numeracy.
118. Provision for homework is good. Appropriate project homework is set for its under-fives, reading work is sent home regularly in KS1 and there is a firm timetable for home tasks in KS2. The work extends the curricular provision effectively.
119. The school has responded well to ACCAC guidelines for PSE. The activities of the School Council are an integral part of the provision where pupils are given opportunities to understand their rights and responsibilities. The school makes good use of every possible occasion to ensure pupils discuss feelings and consider the importance of friendship and realise that they are all unique. They are guided regularly to think about citizenship in terms of the community of Merthyr and to realise their role in global terms by raising money for good causes. Recently the school held a successful 'Fair Trade Week'.
120. The school is aiming to obtain recognition as an Eco School and has already won the bronze flag. There is a prominent emphasis on healthy eating, sustainable development, recycling and reducing waste and conserving energy and water. Y6 pupils for example discuss tragedies such as the Sea Empress accident and its detrimental effect on birds and animals nearby.

121. Pupils' cultural development is outstanding. They are knowledgeable about the heritage of Wales and can name heroes like Joseph Parry who contributed to this culture. Through Urdd activities they play an active part in Welsh culture with older ones benefiting from residential experiences in Llangrannog.
122. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is an important part of the curricular provision. Although the school does not feel it uses the resources of the local area fully yet, elements of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig are appropriately based on examples from the surrounding community. Visiting places of interest in Wales such as museums confirms pupils' awareness of Welsh culture and the Cwricwlwm Cymreig.
123. Visits to a range of places of worship confirm pupils' understanding of other cultures. Respect for and awareness of other languages are given a focus in collective worship sessions and the diversity of art around the world is celebrated.
124. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. School collective worship sessions offer a pleasant ambience of worship in which there is an element of reflection and a clear Christian ethos. Pupils have an opportunity to participate when discussing love and reflecting on the wonders of the creation of the world. The sessions provide good morals which form a particularly effective basis for everyday life at the school. Pupils have a sound understanding of right and wrong and take responsibilities enthusiastically; for example, the youngest pupils take on classroom duties and older ones act as monitors supervising youngsters and controlling entrances to the school. Y6 oversee the fruit tuck shop and begin to establish an awareness of entrepreneurial skills.
125. The school's extra-curricular development is good. Lunchtime and after-school clubs such as the cricket club extend pupils' experiences. Individuals have good experiences through liaison with other schools in sports and dance via the Merthyr Language Initiative (Menter Iaith Merthyr).
126. Links with parents are good. The parents of under-fives are invited to participate in projects such as 'Chwarae ac Iaith' (Language and Play) and 'Dwylo Prysur' (Busy Hands); through these the school promotes lifelong learning. Parents help in the school with reading and are invited to class assemblies. They are given detailed information about school events via a full prospectus, regular letters and a school magazine. A home/school contract is in operation. Parents were enthusiastic in their praise for the school in the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting. However, the Governing Body's Annual Report to Parents does not comply fully with statutory requirements.
127. The PTA raises money frequently and plays an important part in supporting social activities to provide a link between home, school and community.
128. Although there is no policy for partnerships with industry, links are developing appropriately. The school has forged links with S4C for 'Business in the

Community'. The school visits Techniquest frequently and has regular links with the EBP including a recent visit by a teacher to a water processing plant at Cilfynydd. Local industry has provided assistance in paying for a computer and the school is keen to develop these links further.

129. Partnerships with other schools are good. The school regularly accepts students from a teacher training university which makes a contribution to pupils' learning. The relationship with the receiving secondary school is strong.
130. The relationship with Welsh medium schools in the cluster feeding the secondary school and the feeder nursery schools is good as is the relationship with English medium schools in Merthyr; for example the under fives teachers interact closely with a network of LEA early years' teachers and the school benefits from partnerships with the LEA and services offered by them.
131. Partnership with the community is good. The school plays a prominent part in the area and pupils raise money on a local level as well as visiting an old people's home, participating in concerts and carol services. The school has good links with the Merthyr and Taff Ely Language Initiatives and a number of pupils take advantage of the childcare club run by the Taff Ely Language Initiative.

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

132. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
133. The quality of care, support and guidance offered to learners is good. Pupils are extremely happy at the school. They feel valued and supported. Parents also have confidence in the care and guidance provided.
134. The school has a number of very good procedures for dealing with pupils' concerns, Pupils feel the system is effective, and that they can share concerns or complaints with their teachers.
135. The under fives feel safe at school and the close liaison between the nursery groups and the school ensure that they settle in quickly. Effective arrangements for transition to the secondary school ensure that Y6 pupils are confident when changing school.
136. Constant attention is given to pupils' personal welfare and health and safety matters. Good practical steps are taken to ensure pupils' safety whilst at the school and when crossing the bridge to the buses at the start and end of the day. School entrances are kept locked during the day and a fire drill is held regularly. Supervision arrangements for pupils are clearly noted in the school's documentation and are implemented effectively.

137. Risk assessments are undertaken before taking pupils on trips outside the school and a recent risk assessment has been undertaken of school buildings.
138. A handbook is provided for lunchtime supervisors explaining their duties and responsibilities; this ensures that pupils receive good care during the lunch hour.
139. There is a specific procedure for administering medicines to pupils, and the school provides clear information about the misuse of alcohol and drugs. This provision has a good influence on pupils' attitudes. Procedures for caring for pupils who feel unwell or have an accident are effective and a good number of teachers hold first aid qualifications.
140. No evidence of bullying was seen during the inspection; the school has clear guidelines for dealing with problems should the need arise. Staff have a good knowledge of the detailed guidelines available to them in the area of child protection. Arrangements for action are well established, the head and deputy are responsible for the area.
141. Policies for sex education and racial equality are firmly established, and are known to all staff. The school effectively provides for equal opportunities for all pupils, including those with physical disabilities, although the upstairs classroom in the double demountable is not appropriate for them.
142. Very effective procedures are in place, such as reward systems, to promote pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. All kinds of success are celebrated regularly in various ways.
143. The good relationship between the school and organisations such as the police and the nurse positively promote pupils' health and safety. The commitment to the LEA's healthy schools scheme, the fruit tuck shop and the water machine raise awareness of the benefits of healthy eating.
144. Provision for pupils with SEN is good and fully complies with the CoP. Appropriate use is made of standardised tests for early identification. Pupils are well supported by classroom teachers, a specialist teacher, and teachers' aides to achieve targets identified in their IEPs.
145. Effective use is made of external agencies, but there is currently no educational psychologist within the LEA to deal with the particular problems of some pupils with SEN. Where there is close liaison between the school and parents, pupils make good progress.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

146. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
147. The last two years has been a very unstable period in the school's leadership and management as a result of the previous head's regular absence through illness.
148. During this period the deputy head played a key role in ensuring that a team spirit exists between teachers; for example, the school took part in a number of national initiatives such as being awarded the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark.
149. Although the new head only started in her role a few weeks prior to the inspection, she has prioritised appropriately by reviewing the school's aims and objectives, presenting her vision to the staff and GB, monitoring learning and teaching and developing the self-evaluation process. Within a short space of time she has succeeded in developing a feeling of purpose within the school community.
150. The head and deputy work well together and day to day procedures are effective.
151. The school's SMT has recently been re-established and manages the school effectively. Lines of communication within the school are clear and regular staff meetings are a forum in which opinions can be heard and recorded.
152. There are clear shortcomings in the role of subject co-ordinators. Some teachers have changed responsibilities a number of times recently and they are not confident about their duties. They have not had opportunities to monitor learning and teaching in their subjects nor to complete or update schemes of work. A number of them have not received INSET appropriate to their current responsibilities. Despite this, they are keen to develop professionally and one teacher has succeeded in obtaining funding from the General Teaching Council for Wales to attend an information technology exhibition in London.
153. Staff job descriptions do not accurately reflect their responsibilities as they have not been updated. A number of management policies also have not been revised and performance management procedures are inadequately developed.
154. Arrangements regarding the induction of NQTs and students are dealt with by the deputy head; they are appropriate and support is good.

155. The GB is caring and supportive of the school and the head is eager that their expertise be used. As a result they are developing into effective stakeholders in the school's procedures.

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

156. The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report as the school awarded itself a Grade 3 in this key question.

157. The self-evaluation document formulated by the head in consultation with teachers is comprehensive, giving a clear and accurate picture of the school's strengths, where improvement is needed and what needs to be prioritised.

158. Recommendations identified in this report are already noted as areas for development in school documentation. The inspection team agrees with the judgement of the school in four of the key questions, but has awarded a higher grade in two others and a lower grade in one.

159. A culture of self-evaluation has already been established amongst staff by the deputy head who was in post as acting head. Although co-ordinators' monitoring results have not fed formally into the self-evaluation process, whole-school INSET time has been set aside to identify and discuss the school's strengths and weaknesses. All staff know the school well.

160. A number of documents have been produced to move the school forward since the last inspection. An appropriate post-inspection action plan was formulated but because of problems at the school, targets were not realised adequately to ensure progress.

161. The school responded appropriately to the investigation undertaken by the LEA into the decline in standards following the last inspection, and prioritised accordingly; the SDP identifies these priorities appropriately. The school regularly compares its performance with that of other schools.

162. Shortly after her appointment the head undertook an analysis and evaluation of what had been achieved in the SDP, in order to enable the school to formulate a long-term document to move the school forward.

163. The GB is developing its role increasingly in the self-evaluation process but although parents are very knowledgeable about the school, they have not had an opportunity to have a formal input. The school has planned appropriately for the arrangements which provide teachers with preparation, planning and assessment time from September 2005 onwards.

164. The voice of the School Council is given appropriate attention in school life; members convey a clear opinion on aspects of life at the school and take pride in the attention given to their ideas by teachers.

165. Although the school's progress immediately following the last inspection was slow, during the year 2004-2005 the school has made good progress..

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

166. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
167. There are enough appropriately qualified teachers to teach all aspects of the curriculum. Their expertise is used well and they exchange classes; for example Y2 and Y6 teachers change for mathematics and physical education lessons.
168. Responsibilities for subjects and aspects are shared fairly among staff. The head does not have a class responsibility.
169. The good impact of internal training is visible in aspects of learning and teaching, for example the effective use made of ICT across the school, and art in KS2.
170. Effective use is made of the specialist teacher who supports the language of pupils with SEN; her input is of high quality. Support staff in classrooms work extremely well to promote the progress of pupils in their care. A number of boys and girls benefit from coaching by specialist music teachers.
171. The standard of cleanliness at the school is very good and the caretaker and ancillary and administrative staff have a good influence on the running of the school from day to day.
172. Overall, the school has adequate appropriate resources for all ages though there is a shortage of large equipment in the nursery classrooms. Resources are in good condition, and consistent and effective use is made of them during lessons. Materials for developing creative and practical skills are adequate and extremely effective use is made by staff and pupils of interactive whiteboards.
173. In a recent document relating to the school's buildings, the LEA notes that the accommodation is in a poor condition and is unsuitable for learning and teaching in the twenty first century. It states that the hall is too small, that there is no room to establish an information technology suite and that the temporary accommodation is in a poor state of repair. Recently, the school has been involved in consultation discussions regarding moving to another building in 2007.
174. Despite this, very effective use is made of the current accommodation. Although space is limited, the hall is used successfully for physical education lessons, to hold whole-school assemblies and to serve lunch. Although the two demountable classrooms look unsightly from outside, teachers' care ensures

that they are attractive inside. A purposeful library, located in the middle of the main building, is used well by KS1 and KS2 pupils. Appropriate use is made of three designated classrooms by KS1 pupils for language, mathematics and science lessons; the system works well in general, particularly in terms of the availability of resources, but a lack of ownership of the rooms leads to a lack of care from time to time. The current building limits the school's ability to develop in a number of aspects of school life.

175. Lively and tasteful displays on classroom walls and in corridors contribute well to creating a pleasant ethos in the school, and are effective learning resources.
176. The school has no playing field, but the yard is marked appropriately for games although the demountable classrooms in the yard significantly diminish the playing area and opportunities for environmental education. There is a purposeful yard for the under fives. Play areas are safe, and appropriate use is made of them.
177. Budgetary control is tight, and the school operates well within its budget. The GB monitors all expenditure effectively and ensures cost-effectiveness. The SDP is used as a tool for budgetary planning for the future.
178. The school provides good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Under fives

Nursery

Language, literacy and communication skills

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

179. Nursery children listen well and understand all instructions and guidance given by adults. They respond well to instructions on how to make biscuits for example, and endeavour to remember the correct words for ingredients in a recipe. They listen well to the story book 'Dyma Olwen yr Octopws' and can describe in simple terms how Olwen feels; they can identify with characters in their favourite stories. They contribute well when creating an alliterative sentence based on the letter 'o'

Shortcomings

180. Children's pre-reading skills are not developing adequately as there is insufficient visual print in the class and children do not handle and discuss books independently.

181. Children's pre-writing skills are limited.

Personal and social development

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

182. Nursery children understand that they need to take care of personal hygiene after completing activities and before eating. They keep on task and persevere. They accept that they need to follow the class procedure and that they are expected to comply in collective worship sessions. They take their turn when playing games and work well together in groups. They are eager to please. They display confidence when demonstrating their skills to their peers.

Shortcomings

183. Pupils do not show sufficient development in making choices and working independently.

Mathematical development

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

184. Nursery children develop appropriate mathematical vocabulary such as 'big' and 'small', 'short' and 'long'. They can count five on a string and can correctly form the shape of the numbers in sand, air and on the floor. They understand the concept of 'first' and consolidate their understanding in a number of number songs. They can identify two-dimensional shapes and name several of them. They understand simple concepts relating to capacity when playing in water and become familiar with coins and the buying and selling process in the classroom seaside shop.

Shortcomings

185. There are no significant shortcomings.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

186. Nursery children understand the work of the policeman and the postman. They can identify the characteristics of some small animals and which ones can be seen at the seaside; they observe different shaped shells curiously through a magnifying glass and feel them inquisitively. They understand that there are different types of materials and that it is possible to roll dough to change its shape. They understand that particular ingredients are needed to cook and that a recipe needs to be followed in order to produce food successfully. They notice that objects can float or sink in water. They understand what is possible when using a computer and printer.

Shortcomings

187. There are no significant shortcomings

Physical development

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

188. Nursery children handle writing apparatus well and can control a computer mouse and move the cursor appropriately to dress a teddy on the screen. They develop good skills in rolling paper and use gluing equipment with appropriate

control. They can control equipment in the sand to create a castle. They develop pushing, pulling and balancing skills when riding bikes, bouncing on large balls and sliding down a slide.

Shortcomings

189. Children's fine motor skills are not developed sufficiently.

Creative development

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

190. Nursery children sing enthusiastically and create appropriate physical actions to songs. They understand that there are a range of sound sources when selecting, experimenting and playing with a number of instruments on the sound board. They create self-portraits using paper and wool and use chalk and paint freely. They role play appropriately in the shop, taking on the role of buyer and seller. They use clay and dough appropriately.

Shortcomings

191. Children's creative skills are not developing adequately; much of what they create is uniform.

Reception

Language, literacy and communication skills

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

192. Reception children develop good listening skills which ensure they have a good understanding of a good range of language patterns which they use consistently and accurately. They ask and respond to questions appropriately and can give reasons for their opinions and their responses. They use a range of words linked to the seaside. They can explain how to help a penguin fly and explain clearly what a parachute does. They identify numerous initial sounds and letters of words correctly and can list words beginning with the same letter. They discuss books appropriately and can relate to a number of characters in their stories. Several form letters and copy words correctly and some write their names legibly.

Shortcomings

193. Children's skills in decoding and identifying words displayed in the classroom environment do not develop adequately.
194. Children's emergent writing skills do not developing sufficiently.

Personal and social development

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

195. Reception children understand the behavioural expectations of the class and respond well to the day's routine. They show considerable self-discipline when selecting activities and display independence in performing them. They understand that they must wait their turn and allow others to answer questions. The majority can dress and undress themselves and take care of their personal possessions. They understand that they have a responsibility to tidy up at the end of the session and that they need to wear an apron to play with water and use paint. They understand that feelings and having friends are important.

Shortcomings

196. There are no significant shortcomings.

Mathematical development

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

197. Reception children can count to 20 and backwards from ten to one confidently. They pronounce numbers correctly when singing a range of number songs. They recognise numbers under ten and can place them correctly on a number line. They can solve simple addition problems mentally. They understand the importance of sequence when recording the days of the week. They identify two-dimensional shapes correctly and can name and comprehend the characteristics of some three dimensional shapes. They understand the concept of 'full' and 'half full' when filling containers in water and sand. They realise that it is possible to record information such as the class' favourite ice cream in graph format and they begin to understand that a butterfly's wings are symmetrical. They can form sets based on shape and colour.

Shortcomings

198. There are no significant shortcomings.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

199. Reception children understand that some animals change as they grow. They make appropriate comments when demonstrating their understanding of the life cycle of butterflies. They know under what conditions a penguin lives. They understand the importance of senses as they feel, smell and taste and know what the function of a fire engine and a policeman's main duties are. They know that there are specific customs involved in a wedding ceremony and they create greeting cards and invitations for a pretend wedding ceremony in the classroom. They understand that juice and water can change when frozen and defrosted and they realise that salt melts ice.

Shortcomings

200. There are no important shortcomings.

Physical development

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

201. Reception children use good skills when handling pencils, chalk and crayons. They control small fishing rods well whilst playing in the water tub. They handle pieces of jigsaw dextrously and use apparatus to glue and cut effectively. They can handle small blocks to build towers, mould clay to a particular shape and control equipment in dry and wet sand. They move safely around climbing apparatus and can balance their bodies on benches and mats, stretching their muscles and moving around the floor imitating the shape of a camel, frog, cup and star. They can aim correctly at a target.

Shortcomings

202. There are no significant shortcomings.

Creative development

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

203. Reception children work well together to create a robot from two-dimensional shapes. They display creativity when decorating a butterfly with a variety of

materials, such as sequins and shiny paper and create attractive headbands decorated with interesting patterns. They role-play realistically when dancing in the style of Caribbean ladies on board ship in the classroom. They understand how to play untuned instruments and can recall a number of nursery rhymes and language songs. They mould clay successfully to create models of small animals.

Shortcomings

204. There are no significant shortcomings.

Welsh

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings	Key Stage 1
Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings	Key Stage 2

Good features

205. Pupils of all ages and abilities in KS1 listen well. They concentrate well when listening to their favourite stories through headphones.

206. Pupils across KS1 converse fluently when discussing books relating to the theme 'Living Things'. They can talk about a number of animals and describe their characteristics. They make a good effort to use extended vocabulary and correct language patterns in their responses.

207. In KS1 pupils identify well with characters from their favourite stories; they can recall their adventures and describe their characteristics and feelings correctly. They understand and describe the difference between a story and a factual book. They use terminology correctly when explaining the characteristics of factual books and understand the importance of an index and the significance of headings in them.

208. In accordance with their age and experience, KS1 pupils read well. They use picture clues and diagrams to help them understand content and to build words appropriately. They read together big books about elephants and snails, the story of the 'Snichod' and texts from the interactive whiteboard meaningfully.

209. KS1 pupils form letters correctly. They create descriptions effectively and understand the need to be concise when presenting facts.

210. Pupils across KS1 develop knowledge about language appropriately when describing an adjective and a simile and they use them well in their creative work.

211. In language lessons KS2 pupils listen well to adults and peers. They are eager to offer comments and to give their opinion and descriptions, endeavouring to use standard language.

212. Across KS2 pupils develop good skills in sorting information when they use factual books effectively. They create their own factual texts, for example Y3 create a factual book for Y1. Their investigative skills are developing well at the upper end of the school, as they research for information to create further understanding about the content of a factual book on rivers.
213. In KS2 pupils read a wide range of poetry, legends and novels for children. They have a good knowledge of authors of Welsh literature for children.
214. Y4 pupils create a parody based on a poem by Mihangel Morgan and Y6 pupils analyse the content of the poem 'Aberfan' by T. Llew Jones effectively; they establish an empathy with the text and state how the poem conveys the tragedy.
215. Across KS2 pupils write for a number of purposes and different audiences. They compose reviews, create questionnaires and recipes. In Y6 they produce interesting scripts which show awareness of the format of the task.
216. Pupils across both key stages use dictionaries appropriately to extend their vocabulary and to correct and improve their work. Their handwriting and spelling skills develop appropriately.

Shortcomings

217. There are no significant shortcomings but the extended writing skills of pupils in both key stages and KS2 pupils' use of paragraphs are not adequately developed.

Mathematics

Grade 2 good features and no important shortcomings:	Key Stage 1
Grade 2 good features and no important shortcomings:	Key Stage 2

Good features

218. Pupils in KS1 recognise, write and arrange numbers with increasing accuracy, and they have a good understanding place value. Y1 pupils deal with numbers from one to twenty confidently, showing increasing understanding of number bonds within addition and subtraction work. They discover missing numbers in patterns swiftly, understand the concept of odd and even numbers, and count confidently in fives and tens.
219. Y2 pupils use addition and subtraction processes effectively, and are confident in doubling and halving numbers. They order and use numbers up to a hundred and succeed in counting forwards and backwards. They solve number problems well.
220. By the end of KS1 pupils display good mental mathematic skills. They count quickly and accurately and can explain their strategies effectively.

221. Y1 pupils have a basic understanding of money, and can identify coins. In Y2 they add and subtract coins correctly when playing in the shop.
222. Y1 pupils' understanding of the characteristics of two dimensional shapes is good, and Y2 pupils have a good knowledge of three dimensional ones. They succeed in describing the main characteristics of various shapes in detail.
223. Y1 pupils use standard units to measure accurately and to estimate sensibly when undertaking practical work. By Y2, they use the standard measurements of mass and volume accurately, and have a good understanding of time.
224. KS1 pupils use simple diagrams and graphs effectively to convey findings.
225. In KS2 pupils have a good understanding of place value and deal confidently with large numbers mentally and on paper. They use a variety of appropriate strategies when counting mentally, and explain procedures well using correct mathematical terms on the whole.
226. Standards in numeracy are good in Y3 and Y4. Pupils investigate number patterns intelligently, forming theories and proving them using orderly methods. Y3 and Y4 pupils show a good knowledge of tables and use the four rules of number appropriately to solve problems. Their knowledge and understanding of simple fractions is good.
227. Older pupils in KS2 multiply and divide large numbers effectively and use calculators skilfully where appropriate. They know multiplication tables and apply the appropriate facts to a range of number problems. They connect fractions, decimals and percentages effectively and display a good understanding of the concept of average. They round numbers up correctly, and deal confidently with negative and square numbers.
228. Across KS2, pupils' understanding of shape and space is good, and they have a broad knowledge of angles, the area of shapes and symmetry. They label and measure a wide range of angles and triangles well. They use analogue and digital clocks correctly and their work with money is good.
229. Across KS2 data work illustrates pupils' ability to collect, convey and analyse a variety of graphs.

Shortcomings

230. There are no significant shortcomings but across the school, pupils do not use an adequate variety of diagrams and graphs to present data, and ICT is not used sufficiently to improve pupils' recording skills in this area.

History

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings	Key Stage 1
Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings	Key Stage 2

Good features

231. KS1 pupils have a good awareness of the concept of 'long ago' and 'today', and realise that objects, such as toys, change over time.
232. KS1 pupils can name and discuss well some famous Welsh characters from the past, such as Saint David, Llywelyn the Great and Barti Ddu .
233. Y1 pupils speak enthusiastically about pirates. They describe Barti Ddu's ship in detail, and compare it well with ships of today.
234. Y1 pupils have a good knowledge of their families and their backgrounds. They draw up a family tree, and succeed in explaining the process and interpreting a family tree very effectively.
235. Pupils' skills in KS2 have been extended as a result of a visit by staff from Pontypridd Museum. They talk enthusiastically about old cameras and balance scales and discuss their purpose well. They know many facts about the washing habits of long ago and are aware of the impact on life when electricity was introduced.
236. KS2 pupils make good use of time lines to promote their awareness of the passing of time. They manage to place events, people and changes within a chronological framework, showing a mature understanding of the way the past has helped form the future.
237. In KS2 pupils display good knowledge of the contribution of famous Welsh people, including Hedd Wyn and Betsi Cadwaladr. They have a good knowledge of Welsh history.
238. KS2 pupils identify very well with historical characters and circumstances. In Y4 they display empathy with children who worked in the coal mines, and older ones identify with the suffering of Anne Frank.
239. In KS2 pupils effectively recall facts from periods they have studied, for example the Celts, the Tudors, the Victorian Era and the Second World War. Y5 pupils show good knowledge and enthusiasm when comparing schools from Victorian times and schools today. Extra curricular work in Y3 on the Celts is of a high standard.
240. KS2 pupils have a good knowledge of local history. In Y3 and Y4 they can discuss the coal mines in the area, and in Y5 they can recall numerous facts about the Iron Masters. When recording their journey to Merthyr Tydfil, they talk in detail about the ironworks, and the home of Joseph Parry.
241. Pupils in both key stages use historical terminology effectively when discussing their work.
242. Visits to local places of interest, such as Cyfarthfa Castle, incite curiosity, and deepen pupils' understanding of history.

243. Across the school, and particularly in KS2, pupils are familiar with a number of skills characteristic of historians and use an appropriate range of sources intelligently to find information. They use their skills of questioning, note-taking and comparing artefacts and pictures well to draw sensible conclusions.

Shortcomings

244. Older pupils in KS1 do not have adequate knowledge of chronology, and they do not use time lines to develop their understanding of the passing of time.

245. Older pupils in KS1 have a limited knowledge of the history of their local area.

Geography

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings	Key Stage 1
Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings	Key Stage 2

Good features

246. KS1 pupils understand the characteristics of the seasons well and they realise the effect the weather has on people and plants.

247. KS1 pupils display simple mapping skills, and can confidently record a journey around the area. They discuss the characteristics of their area well, and name buildings and streets correctly.

248. Y1 pupils have a good knowledge of different methods of travelling and talk enthusiastically about Mr Urdd's journey around the world, naming various countries. They have a good understanding of people who work in the community, such as the vet and the fireman.

249. Y2 pupils can differentiate between aerial pictures and maps. They make clear plans of their bedrooms. They use a digital camera effectively to take aerial pictures of things in the classroom.

250. Older pupils in KS1 know some important facts about life in Botswana.

251. In KS2, pupils compare aspects of life in Botswana and Wales effectively. When studying parts of India, they can sensibly predict the effects of deforestation.

252. At the upper end of KS2, pupils' ability to discuss the influence of man on the environment is good. In Y5 their Tsunami Book records, in a sensitive manner, the consequences of such an enormous wave.

253. KS2 pupils know a great deal about the geography of their locality, and about contrasting areas, such as Snowdonia. In Y4 they have a good knowledge of the human and physical features of Cardiff Bay, as a result of their visit to the area.

The Y3 class book includes photos of the villages in the area, with powerful comments about economic changes.

254. KS2 pupils have a good knowledge of names of countries, capital cities and continents in the world and they place them correctly on a map.
255. Older KS2 pupils use six-digit grid references effectively to locate specific places on a map. They have a good knowledge of bearings and use compass directions appropriately.
256. Pupils across the school have a good range of skills and techniques to research geographical areas. For example, in Y3 they hold an investigation into transport in the village and the effect it has on the environment.
257. Across the school, pupils recall appropriate terminology and use it increasingly accurately.

Shortcomings

258. KS1 pupils' knowledge of areas studied is superficial, and by the end of the key stage, they have only a limited range of geographical skills to research and undertake fieldwork effectively.

Art

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings	Key Stage 1
Grade 1: good with outstanding features	Key Stage 2

Good features

259. Y1 pupils use a variety of apparatus and media to create pictures and sculptures from characters in the Snichod story. They sketch effectively in chalk and pastels and model a variety of attractive characters.
260. Y1 pupils develop an appropriate awareness of shape when they create a collage of the Trevithick engine and they display an understanding of colour, tone and shade when creating a 'Colourful House'.
261. In Y2 pupils look in detail at a picture by Seurat and emulate his style. They use a variety of media including paint, felt pens and chalk, to create the pointillism effect appropriately.
262. Across KS1 pupils use computer programs successfully to understand the importance of shape, line and pattern.
263. Y3 pupils use a number of techniques including sketching, modelling and printing to create still life pictures of flowers. They observe in detail the shape of the petals and their finished work is of a high standard. Their Celtic patterns are very attractive and show a very good awareness of line and shape also

evident in their pictures of the Trevithick engine. Their sculptures of the Millennium Park in Treharris provide evidence of good modelling work.

264. In Y4 pupils create outstanding work which develops a variety of skills and techniques. Their tie and dye batik cushions are very attractive and show sensitivity to colour and tone. They use a wide variety of media including pencil and charcoal to create realistic pictures of their local area. Their work relating to Cardiff Bay, which includes a colourful wall hanging professionally combines an awareness of the work of Picasso with images of the Bay. Their modelling of buildings from the Bay are of a high standard.
265. Y5 pupils effectively emulate a picture by Penry Williams of the Merthyr iron works. They produce pictures of outstanding quality by using a printing technique to convey images of the 'Cantre'r Gwaelod' legend. Their use of colour and tone in pictures conveying the 'Legend of Llyn y Fan Fach' is striking and their pictures of plants show the detail of their observations.
266. In Y6 pupils develop a good understanding of perspective as they sketch scenes around the school. They have a good knowledge of the life and techniques of Van Gogh and can recognise a number of his pictures. Their understanding of the importance of Kyffin Williams as a Welsh artist is very good. They create a good portrait of him using a range of pencils and they emulate his style, pattern and line when looking at the use of shading in his works.
267. Older KS2 pupils create striking work which develops an outstanding awareness of the diversity of art around the world. Their awareness of colour, shape, pattern and tone develops outstandingly as they replicate styles and bright colours of African pictures and the tone and pattern characteristic of artwork relating to the Hindu religion.

Shortcomings

268. KS1 pupils are not sufficiently aware of the work of Welsh artists, nor do they develop adequate skills in mixing paint and in addition their use of terminology is not adequately developed.

School's response to the inspection

The findings of the inspection have been considered in depth by the staff and the GB of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhyd y Grug. We agree with the judgement of the Registered Inspector. The inspection process has been a positive experience to all stakeholders in the school, and confirms the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

The findings of the inspection recognise that we, on the whole, have maintained good standards in teaching and learning, even though the school has experienced a difficult period due to instability in the leadership and management of the school.

We were pleased that the inspectors found pupils' attitudes towards their work, their ability to concentrate and their behaviour to be good features and that standards of achievement in lessons were above the WAG all-Wales targets by 2007. In addition, our care and support systems, which support our curricular provision, are recognised as being appropriate and effective. The skilfulness and commitment of our staff and the care and talents of our ancillary staff receive worthy acknowledgement. Most importantly, the inspection report emphasises the elements which make our school what it is. In particular, the report confirms that we achieve our aim, namely to create a homely, happy, disciplined and challenging environment for everyone to develop into fully rounded individuals through the medium of the Welsh language.

An action plan will be drawn up to address the recommendations of the report. These are to raise standards in the areas for which Grade 3 was awarded, update and complete the schemes of work identified, and develop the role of subject leaders, ensuring there are opportunities for them to monitor regularly the aspects we feel we can address under the guidance of the new SMT and with further training for staff. The staff and governors are already developing their performance management procedures and the content of the GB's annual report to parents and are eager to develop the self-evaluation process.

Where possible, staff and governors will address the recommendations before the end of the next academic year. Raising pupils' standards of achievement will be the main priority and we will ensure that these matters are included in our school development plan. In addition, we will give our staff more opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills as subject leaders so that they can help pupils throughout the school to achieve higher standards in these subjects. Positively, the inspectors identified several elements and procedures in the school that will help to address certain shortcomings by sharing good practice more widely.

A copy of the school's action plan in response to the recommendations of the inspection will be sent to all parents. The GB's annual report to parents will report on the progress we make in relation to the inspection recommendations.

Appendix A

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhyd y Grug
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	3-11 years
Address of school	Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhyd y Grug Quakers Yard Treharris
Post-code	CF46 5AW
Telephone number	01443 410212
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Nutall
Date of appointment	April 2005
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Alan Jones
Registered inspector	Mrs Eleri Betts
Dates of inspection	4.7.05 - 7.7.05

Appendix B

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	22	15	25	21	33	23	28	19	186

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	9	1	9.6

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	23.4:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	11:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	24
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection				
Term	R	KS1	KS2	Whole School
Summer 04	89.19%	92.23%	91.03%	91.62%
Autumn 04	92.03%	92.96%	92.45%	92.44%
Spring 05	90.17%	92.74%	91.71%	92.56%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	18.6%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	-

Appendix C

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2004			Number of pupils in Y2:					33
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	4
Welsh	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	88	12	0
		National	1	1	11	64	23	0
Welsh: oracy	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	88	12	0
		National	1	2	12	63	22	0
Welsh: reading	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	15	58	27	0
		National	1	3	17	59	21	0
Welsh: writing	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	18	82	0	0
		National	1	3	20	65	10	0
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0	3	9	76	12	0
		National	0	2	11	63	24	0
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	3	6	61	30	0
		National	0	2	10	66	22	0

In the school	80%	In Wales	87%
---------------	-----	----------	-----

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

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2004							Number of pupils in Y6		30			
Percentage of pupils at each level												
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	3	0	0	0	0	16	44	37	0
		National	0	0	0	0	0	8.6	12.6	42.1	36.7	0
	Test/Task	School	0	3	0	0	0	0	16	44	37	0
		National	0	0	0	0	0	8.6	12.6	42.1	36.7	0
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	40	30	0
		National	0	0	0	0	0	6	15.2	48.6	30.2	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	40	30	0
		National	0	0	0	0	0	6	15.2	48.6	30.2	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	40	30	0
		National	0	0	0	0	0	6	15.2	48.6	30.2	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	40	43	0
		National	0	0	0	0	0	6.5	15.2	42.9	35.4	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	66	17	0
		National	0	0	0	0	0	3	7.7	50.7	38.6	0
	Test/Task	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	66	17	0
		National	0	0	0	0	0	3	7.7	50.7	38.6	0

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	79.25%	In the school	79.25%
In Wales	70%	In Wales	71%

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

Appendix D

Evidence base of the inspection

- The inspection was undertaken by a team of three inspectors who were present at the school for a total of nine days.
- Pre-inspection meetings were held with parents and the GB to discuss the life and work of the school.
- There was no nominee.
- The team included a peer assessor; she received all the school's documentation, observed lessons and took part in team discussions.
- 43 questionnaires were completed by parents and were analysed in detail; 93% of responses were positive.
- Discussions were held with the head and staff with responsibilities, administrative staff and pupils during the inspection.
- The self-evaluation report was analysed and the school's documentation was examined, along with samples of pupils' work.
- 63 lessons or sessions were observed and all classes were visited.
- A sample of pupils' work was examined across the ability range in all year groups.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- Discussions were held with pupils about life at the school.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed at break time, lunch time and at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Inspectors attended assemblies and observed extra curricular activities.
- Post-inspection discussions were held with staff and the GB.

Appendix E

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mrs Eleri Betts Registered Inspector	Context, summary and recommendations. Key Questions 1,3,5,6. Early Years, Welsh, Art
Mr Gwilym Morris Lay Inspector	Contributions to Questions 1,3,4,7.
Mrs Zorah Evans Team Inspector	Key Questions 2,4,7. Science, history, geography
Mrs Gwenda Roberts Peer Assessor	Observing lessons and contributing to discussions.

Acknowledgement

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

Contractors

Celtic Inspection Services Unit /CISU
UWIC
Cardiff
CF23 6XD

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

**Ysgol Gymraeg Rhyd y Grug
Quakers Yard
Treharris
Merthyr
CF46 5AW**

A SUMMARY REPORT FOR PARENTS

Date of Inspection: July 4th-7th 2005

by

**Mrs Eleri Betts
W248/17717**

Date: September 6th 2005

Under Estyn contract number: T/258/04P

© Crown Copyright 2005

This Report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

Ysgol Gymraeg Rhyd y Grug was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose 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 more information about their child's school. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of Ysgol Gymraeg Rhyd y Grug took place between July 4th and 7th 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Mrs Eleri Betts undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This summary report may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes but only as a whole and provided it is reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

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 each inspection a written report is formulated on seven key questions.

For short inspections, there are no subject reports.

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

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

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

This school received a standard inspection.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years 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 attain the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who attain the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The national curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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.

List of abbreviations used in the report in alphabetical order.

ACCAC	Awdurdod Cymhwysterau Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales
EBP	Education Business Partnership
CoP	Code of Practice
GB	Governing Body
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEP	Individual Education Plan
INSET	In-Service Training
KS1	Key Stage 1
KS2	Key Stage 2
NC	National Curriculum
NQT	Newly Qualified Teachers
PSE	Personal and Social Education
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SDP	School Development Plan
SMT	School Management Team
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
Y	Year

Context

The nature of the provider

1. Ysgol Gymraeg Rhyd y Grug is situated in the village of Quakers Yard near Treharris. The LEA is Merthyr. The main building dates from 1902. It was opened as a Welsh school in 1976 with one class; by today, there are eight classes in the school. A two storey demountable building and another small demountable have been added on the school yard as numbers have increased.
2. Pupils come from the areas of Troed y Rhiw, Aberfan, Merthyr Vale, Edwardsville, Treharris, Quakers Yard, Bedlinog and Trelewis. The school's catchment is in an area of economic disadvantage; a number of villages which feed the school are in receipt of financial aid from the European Social Fund.
3. The majority of pupils receive nursery education either at the school or in nearby nursery groups. There are 186 pupils aged 3-11 at the school at present, a figure which includes 22 full time children in the nursery class. Around 19% of pupils receive free school meals; about 5% come from homes where Welsh is the main language spoken and around 1% are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school notes that 47 pupils are on the SEN register but none is stated.
4. The previous head was absent for a long period of time through illness and for two years an acting head was responsible for the running of the school; a new head was appointed at the beginning of the summer term 2005.
5. The school was last inspected during the summer term, 1999. It was awarded the Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark for Schools in January 2004.
6. The school's motto is 'Gyda'n gilydd croeswn y bont' / 'Together we will cross the bridge'.

The school's priorities and targets

7. The school identifies that its main objectives are to:
 - create a homely, happy, disciplined and challenging environment so that each individual can develop fully through the medium of Welsh;
 - nurture self-esteem, respect for others and for heritage;
 - develop responsible and rounded citizens to meet the challenge of the future;
 - develop each individual to his or her full ability;
 - ensure equal opportunity and make the curriculum child-centred;
 - extend the child's knowledge through a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum;
 - create an environment which promotes independence and confidence;
 - foster an awareness of conservation and preservation of our environment.

8. The school's priorities for the current year are to:

- update the Welsh scheme, improve provision and raise standards of language across the school;
- update the ICT scheme and arrange INSET for staff on new software;
- set targets for basic skills and monitor developments in literacy and numeracy;
- update the design and technology scheme of work;
- establish a School Council;
- improve the school environment and consolidate pupils' awareness of sustainable development and continue with Eco school activities;

Summary

9. The school has a team of committed teachers who have experienced a difficult period because of the instability in the school's leadership and management. They are responding enthusiastically to the new head who, since her appointment at the beginning of the summer term 2005, has provided a clear vision and firm direction to their work. As a result, there has been visible progress in all aspects of life at the school. A very caring ethos and respect for others is evident within the school community.

10. The inspection team agrees with the grades awarded by the school in its self-evaluation document in four of the key questions but has awarded a higher grade in two others and a lower grade in one.

11. The inspection team judged the work of the school as follows:

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 3
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	Grade 2
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	Grade 3
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

Standards

12. Overall, standards in lessons observed are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
8%	78%	14%	-	-

13. For under fives standards across the six areas of learning are as follows:

Nursery

Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 3
Personal and social development	Grade 3
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 3
Creative development	Grade 3

Reception

Language, literacy and communication skills	Grade 3
Personal and social development	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2

14. Standards in KS1 and KS2 in the subjects are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Welsh	Grade 2	Grade 2
Mathematics	Grade 2	Grade 2
History	Grade 3	Grade 2
Geography	Grade 3	Grade 2
Art	Grade 3	Grade 1

15. Standards of achievement in lessons are far higher than WAG all-Wales targets for 2007, which are that 98% should be satisfactory or better (Grade 3) and 65% good or better (Grade 2).

16. The educational provision for the under- fives has some weaknesses, but there is evidence that these weaknesses can soon be put right.

17. Pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve good standards particularly in withdrawal sessions where they are taught in small groups.

18. In KS1 from 2001 onwards the Core Subject Indicator, which combines results in Welsh, mathematics and science, has risen consistently and in 2004 it was, for the first time in years, higher than the LEA and national results. In

comparison with other schools the Welsh and science results were above the median and in mathematics they were exactly in line with the median figure.

19. In national test results in 2004 in KS2 the school succeeded in maintaining the consistent improvement achieved during the previous three years. As a result the Core Subject Indicator was significantly higher than the LEA average and slightly above the all-Wales level. In comparison with other similar schools the school was above the median in mathematics and English, below the median in science and in the lowest quartile in Welsh.
20. Pupils' bilingual skills develop well and the school achieves its aim of ensuring that all are bilingual citizens by the age of eleven.
21. For the under fives standards in key skills are good in numeracy and ICT. In literacy, however, although good features outweigh shortcomings, nursery children do not develop communication skills sufficiently across the areas of learning and in the nursery and reception classes, pre-writing skills are not adequately developed.
22. In KS1 and KS2 development in key skills is good overall in literacy and ICT. In numeracy, however, although good features outweigh shortcomings, skills are not developed consistently.
23. Pupils' awareness of equal opportunities is good with outstanding features.
24. Pupils across the school know exactly what they are going to learn as the lesson's outcomes are made clear at the start. They make good progress towards reaching their potential.
25. Overall, pupils' creative skills are good. Much of the work produced in art in KS2 shows outstanding creativity. Younger pupils, however, do not always develop creativity fully as they are not given enough choice of media and completed work is uniform in nature. Pupils' problem solving skills are limited across the school.
26. The under-fives and KS1 pupils develop a good understanding of some jobs which are central to the life of the community. Older pupils realise what work opportunities are available in the local area.
27. Pupils' standard of behaviour is good. They are polite and friendly and older ones are eager to care for those younger than themselves. Pupils of all ages understand that they must respect school rules.
28. Pupils' attitudes towards learning are consistently good; their behaviour has a positive effect on standards of work.
29. Average attendance during the last three terms is 92%.

The Quality of Education and Training.

30. The quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
24%	56%	20%	-	-

31. Although the school has no teaching and learning policy which would ensure parity of teaching practices within the school, the quality of teaching is a strength and is a key element in the progress made by pupils.
32. The quality of teaching of pupils with SEN is consistently good, and sometimes very good, where there is effective support for pupils within the classroom, or in withdrawal groups.
33. In all lessons there is a clear and consistent focus, with effective revision at the end. Care is taken in planning, with the provision of suitable differentiated tasks.
34. In general, teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and they are aware of recent developments. Their working relationship with pupils is outstanding and they constantly praise individual efforts. ICT is used effectively to enrich teaching.
35. The school's assessment policy is clear, and in general, procedures are effective, especially for pupils with SEN and for the under- fives.
36. Pupils' work is marked regularly although good practice is not consistent across the school; in the best examples, comments offer appropriate guidance on how to improve work.
37. Overall, the school provides a broad and relevant curriculum.
38. For the under-fives, the curriculum is appropriately based on the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. It is presented through relevant themes and there are exciting links between activities in different areas. However, planning for the full cycle of themes has not been completed and the planning work already undertaken has not been evaluated. In the nursery class the provision is too structured on occasions.
39. The curriculum for KS1 and KS2 is delivered in an interesting manner with many opportunities for practical work. However, there is a variation in the effectiveness of schemes of work across the subjects, as a number of them have not been updated. This has a detrimental effect on progression in subjects. During the inspection, work was seen being delivered at the same level to different age classes across the school. The provision for homework is good.
40. Recently the school has moved forward with planning for key skills. These are mapped out and a code is used appropriately to ensure provision.

41. The school responds well to ACCAC guidelines for PSE. The activities of the School Council are an integral part of the provision where pupils are given opportunities to understand their rights and responsibilities.
42. The school is aiming to be recognised as an Eco School and has already won the bronze flag. Clear emphasis is placed on healthy eating, sustainable development, recycling, reducing waste and conserving energy and water.
43. Pupils' cultural development is outstanding. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is an important part of the provision.
44. Visits to a range of places of worship confirm pupils' understanding of other cultures. Respect for and awareness of other languages are given a clear focus at the school.
45. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. School collective worship sessions offer a pleasant ambience of worship in which there is an element of reflection and a clear Christian ethos. These sessions offer pupils good morals. Pupils take on responsibilities enthusiastically. The school's extra-curricular provision is good.
46. Links with parents are good. A home/school contract is in operation. Parents were enthusiastic in their praise for the school in the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting. However, the Governing Body's Annual Report to Parents does not comply fully with statutory requirements.
47. Although there is no policy for partnerships with industry, links are developing appropriately as part of the school's good partnership with its community.
48. Partnerships with other schools are good. The relationship with the secondary school is strong and there is a suitable transition policy as well as effective curricular links. The relationship with Welsh medium schools in the cluster feeding the secondary school and the feeder nursery schools is good, as are the partnerships with English medium schools in the county.
49. The quality of care, support and guidance offered to learners is good. Pupils are extremely happy at the school.
50. Constant attention is given to pupils' personal welfare, and health and safety matters. Good practical steps are taken to ensure pupils' safety whilst at the school and when crossing the bridge to the buses at the start and end of the day.
51. No evidence of bullying was seen during the inspection; the school has clear guidelines for dealing with problems should the need arise. Staff have a good knowledge of the detailed guidelines available to them in the area of child protection. Arrangements for action are well established; the head and deputy are responsible for this area.

52. Policies for sex education and racial equality are firmly established, and are known to all staff. The school effectively promotes equal opportunities for all pupils, including those with physical disabilities, although the classroom upstairs in the double demountable is not appropriate for them.
53. There are very effective procedures in place, such as reward systems, to promote pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem.
54. Provision for pupils with SEN is good, and fully complies with the CoP. Appropriate use is made of standardised tests to identify needs at an early stage. Pupils are well supported by classroom teachers, a specialist teacher, and teachers' aides to achieve targets identified in their IEPs.
55. Effective use is made of external agencies, but there is currently no educational psychologist within the LEA to deal with the particular problems of some pupils with SEN. Where there is close liaison between the school and parents these pupils make good progress.

Leadership and management

56. The last two years has been a very unstable period in the school's leadership and management as a result of the previous head's regular absence through illness.
57. During this period the deputy head played a key role in ensuring that a team spirit exists between teachers; for example, the school took part in a number of national initiatives such as being awarded the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark.
58. Although the new head only started in her role a few weeks prior to the inspection, she has prioritised appropriately. Within a short space of time, she has succeeded in developing a feeling of purpose within the school community. However, performance management procedures are not adequately developed.
59. There are clear shortcomings in the role of subject co-ordinators. Some teachers have changed responsibilities a number of times recently and they are not confident in their duties. They have not had opportunities to monitor learning and teaching in their subjects nor to complete or update schemes of work. A number of them have not received INSET appropriate to their current responsibilities.
60. The GB has a caring and supportive attitude towards the school and the head is eager to use their expertise effectively; as a result they are developing into effective stakeholders in the school's procedures.
61. The self-evaluation document formulated by the head in consultation with teachers is comprehensive and gives a clear and accurate picture of the school's strengths, where improvement is needed and what should be prioritised. The recommendations identified in this report are noted as areas for development in the school documentation.

62. The school responded appropriately to the investigation undertaken by the LEA into the decline in standards following the last inspection, and prioritised accordingly. The SDP identifies the school's priorities appropriately. The school regularly compares its performance with that of other schools.
63. The GB and pupils, through the School Council, are developing their role increasingly in the self-evaluation process; however although parents are very knowledgeable about the school, they have not had an opportunity to have a formal input.
64. Although the school's progress immediately following the last inspection was slow, during the school year 2004-2005 progress has been good.
65. There are enough appropriately qualified teachers to teach all aspects of the curriculum. Their expertise is used well and they exchange classes.
66. Effective use is made of a specialist teacher who supports the language of pupils with SEN. Classroom support staff work extremely well to promote progress amongst pupils in their care.
67. The standard of cleanliness at the school is very good, and the caretaker and ancillary and administrative staff have a good influence on the day to day running of the school.
68. Overall, the school has adequate appropriate resources for all ages though there is a shortage of large equipment in the nursery classroom. The resources are in good condition, and consistent and effective use is made of them during lessons.
69. Very effective use is made of accommodation. Although space is limited, the hall is used successfully for physical education lessons, to hold whole-school assemblies, and to serve lunch. Although the two storey cabin looks unsightly from outside, teachers' care ensures that it is attractive inside. The building, however, limits the school's ability to develop a number of aspects of school life. The LEA itself is critical of the state of the building and recently the school has been involved in consultation discussions regarding moving to another building in 2007.
70. The lively and tasteful displays on classroom walls and in corridors contribute well to creating a pleasant ethos in the school, and are effective learning resources.
71. The school has no playing field, but the yard is marked appropriately for games although the demountable buildings in the yard significantly diminish the playing area and environmental education. There is a purposeful yard for the under-fives. Play areas are safe and appropriate use is made of them.

72. Budgetary control is robust, and the school operates well within its budget. The GB monitors all expenditure effectively and ensures cost-effectiveness. The SDP is used as a tool for budgetary planning for the future.

73. The school provides good value for money.

Recommendations

In order to move the school forward teachers and GB need to:

R1 raise standards in language, literacy and communication skills, personal and social development, physical development and creative development in the nursery class and in language, literacy and communication skills in the reception class,

R2 raise standards in history, geography and art in KS1;

R3 ensure that schemes of work for subjects are complete and are appropriately updated;

R4 develop the role of the subject co-ordinators and provide opportunities for them to monitor subjects regularly;

R5 develop performance management procedures;

R6 continue to develop the self-evaluation process;

R7 ensure that the content of the GB's annual report to parents complies fully with statutory requirements.

N.B. Recommendations 3-6 are already identified in the self-evaluation report as issues of which the school is aware are in need for improvement.

Acknowledgement

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