



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on  
Ysgol Twynyrodyn Community School**

**Gilfach Cynon  
Twynyrodyn  
Merthyr  
CF47 0LW**

**Date of inspection: March 2011**

**By**

**Mr Merfyn Lloyd Jones**

**Under Contract For**

**Estyn**

**Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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## Context

Twynyrodyn Primary school is located within the town of Merthyr and is maintained by Merthyr Tydfil local authority (LA). It provides education for pupils between three and eleven years of age. It is situated in a socio economically challenged area with 37 per cent of its pupils being among the 20% most deprived in Wales and 14 per cent of being in receipt of free school meals. It is the fourth most challenged in its family of schools. The school currently houses a LA learning resource base at key stage 2 for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Nearly all the pupils are from English speaking backgrounds. Six pupils have English as an additional language.

There are currently 284 pupils on roll including 52 who attend the nursery in the mornings and afternoons. Base line assessments show that attainment on entry compare well with local averages. Sixty three pupils (26%) are identified as having additional learning needs. No pupils received fixed-term exclusions in the last year.

The head teacher is on secondment to the WAG with the deputy head teacher currently being in charge. The school was last inspected in 2005.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Twynyrodyn is £3256, which compares with a maximum of £6431 and a minimum of £3035 for primary schools in Merthyr Tydfil. The school has the 17th highest budget per pupil out of the 25 primary schools in Merthyr Tydfil.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

### Current performance

The school is good because:

- nearly all pupils', including the less able, make good progress in most areas;
- the high quality of care, support and guidance which leads to excellent standards of pupils' wellbeing;
- teaching is good and pupils benefit from an interesting curriculum; and
- the highly effective pupil participation in decision making.

## Prospects for improvement

The school has excellent prospects for improvement because of the:

- the willingness of leaders at all levels to involve pupils in decision making;
- receptiveness of the school to new and innovative ways to improve its provision; and
- highly effective professional learning community within the school and beyond.

## Recommendations

In order to improve further the school should:

R1 raise standards in Welsh as a second language at key stage 2 and further develop pupils' bilingual skills across the age range;

R2 further develop the coordination of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT; and

R3 ensure that the link between self-evaluation and priorities for improving outcomes are clear.

### ***What happens next?***

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	Good
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### **Standards: Good**

Nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, achieve well in most areas during their time at the school.

The school's performance against the main indicators over the past three years compares well with schools in similar circumstances and pupils' prior attainment.

Statutory teacher assessments in 2010 indicate that 78.1% of pupils in key stage 1 achieved the core subject indicator (CSI) i.e. the expected level 2 in the three subjects of English, mathematics and science in comparison with the family average of 82.7% and the national percentage of 81.6 per cent. In the same year in key stage 2, 76.9% of pupils attained the CSI at level 4 or above compared with the family average of 78.9 % and the 78.2 % nationally.

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The performance in 2010 at the higher levels in key stage 1 is above the national average and amongst the highest in the family in both English and mathematics. At key stage 2, performance at the higher level is the highest in the family in both English and science.

The difference in the performance of girls and boys in 2010 in both key stages is greater than the family and national average.

Consideration of the data over the past three years indicates that performance in both key stages against CSI is generally above the family, LA and national averages. When compared with schools which have a similar number of pupils entitled to receive free school meals, performance in both key stages, against CSI is generally in the upper 50%.

Over the same period the number of pupils attaining the higher levels in English and science at key stage 2 is consistently above family, LA and national figures.

Overall the performance of girls is better than the boys. In both key stages the difference generally reflects the national picture.

Most pupils with ALN achieve well against personal targets and make good progress relative to their ability, interests and previous attainment. Pupils within the Learning Resource achieve well. Most pupils entitled to free school meals make good progress in line with their ability.

In the Foundation Phase, most children make very good progress, settling quickly into school routines and becoming increasingly confident learners. In relation to their age and ability, many pupils make good progress in most areas of learning as they move through the school. At key stage 2, most pupils recall their previous learning well and show good knowledge and understanding of what they have learnt in many subjects. Many can apply their skills well to new situations showing increasing confidence as they progress through the school.

Progress made by the majority of pupils in developing a wide range of skills is good. Almost without exception pupils listen well and most speak very confidently in different situations. Within the wide range of pupils' abilities, most read competently. This enables them to access information at appropriate levels of understanding and use it to support and improve their learning in a variety of subjects. Throughout the school most pupils make effective use of their writing skills for different purposes and in different styles, with increasing confidence. Most pupils have very well developed ICT skills. Older pupils use these skills very effectively to seek out and search for information to support their work. Many pupils throughout the school use their thinking skills confidently and purposefully in many learning situations. By the end of key of key stage 2 many pupils have developed good problem solving skills. They organise their work logically and draw sensible conclusions.

Overall, pupils' Welsh language skills in the Foundation Phase and key stage 1 are good. Most pupils' understand and respond well to a range of simple questions and instructions. Many read and write simple texts with increasing confidence and accuracy and most have good pronunciation. The standard of Welsh at key stage 2

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is adequate. In years 3 and 4 pupils' oral skills are developing well but the progress of many pupils' in years 5 and 6 is slow. Their ability to read and write in Welsh is less well developed. The ability of many pupils to use Welsh in informal situations in and around the school is very limited. Pupils' awareness of the history and culture of Wales is generally good.

**Wellbeing: Excellent**

Pupils have very positive and realistic attitudes to adopting healthy lifestyles, including taking regular exercise and eating healthy foods. Nearly all pupils show very positive attitudes to learning. Most are courteous, polite and well-mannered. Their behaviour is very good. Most are interested in their work, sustain concentration and engage in task enthusiastically. A particularly good feature is their ability to share, take turns, work co-operatively and sensibly in groups.

All pupils, including those in the resource unit, play a full and active part in school life. This helps develop the strong sense of inclusion and belonging that is evident in the school. Most pupils take responsibility for their own actions and are sympathetic to the needs of others. They show these attributes exceptionally well in their work and play.

Many pupils take on a variety of responsibilities such as their mediation roles. They carry out their duties with self-assurance, maturity and a sense of pride. All pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They have great confidence in adults and value the care, support and guidance given by them.

Throughout the school most are confident in deciding what and how they learn and many have a good understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. This is particularly the case in language.

An outstanding feature is the way many pupils are represented through a range of committees and have been responsible for many developments at the school. This is a particular strength. Many take an active part in community activities. They are well prepared for life and work outside school.

Attendance data indicates that the school performance of 93.29% is in line with the All Wales average. Nearly all the pupils are punctual.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>
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<b>Good</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Good**

The quality of learning experiences is good. Teachers provide a good range of interesting learning experiences within and beyond the school. Learning opportunities in the Foundation phase are stimulating and imaginative. The curriculum requirements at key stage 2, including religious education are met well.

Provision for developing pupils' skill is generally good. Opportunities to develop communication and listening skills are a strength of the school. ICT provision is good and there are well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop ICT skills across the curriculum. However, the long-term plans for the development of numeracy, literacy and ICT skills have not yet been fully developed.

The provision for Welsh language development is an improving aspect of the school but the use of Welsh outside the classroom is not well developed. Opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge of the Welsh dimension are good.

The provision for developing pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship is effective. This is contributed to by successful partnerships with schools in Qatar and Zanzibar and an active eco committee and eco monitors.

### **Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching is good. The range of teaching methods and strategies stimulate the interest of pupils and the pace of many lessons is consistently appropriate. Teachers' short term plans are focused effectively on pupils' skills and identify clear learning objectives.

Classroom organisation is effective and a range of useful equipment and resources is provided. There are colourful, attractive and stimulating displays in the classrooms, which promote learning well. In most lessons tasks are appropriate to the needs of pupils. Adult support is well utilized during lesson activities and makes a significant contribution to learning.

Assessment arrangements are good, are well-embedded and pupils are adept at developing success criteria for lessons. Pupils assess their own and their peers' learning effectively. An innovative on-line system to allow pupils to self-assess and provide evidence for achievement is now in place but has not yet had an impact on standards. Feedback to pupils is effective and enables pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.

The reports to parents meet the statutory requirements, with appropriate information in place. Parents and carers state that they receive clear information about their children's progress.

### **Care, support and guidance: Excellent**

The school is a caring community where pupils feel happy and safe. Arrangements to support pupils' well-being are excellent and well established. The school's

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commitment to moral and social development is an outstanding feature. The Student Assist Programme provides a high level of support to pupils. Pupils' health and wellbeing are encouraged, including regular exercise and healthy eating. There is appropriate provision for pupils' spiritual development through collective worship, where pupils are provided with opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs.

Pupils and parents access a wide range of useful information through the school website and opportunities for extending learning are available through 'Moodle'.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

The school ensures good provision for pupils with additional learning needs and pupils who need additional help are identified effectively. Learning assistants provide these pupils with good quality support in and outside the classroom. The school accesses specialist services appropriately.

Provision for pupils in the Learning Resource Base is good and a number of pupils integrate successfully into mainstream classes for some lessons.

**Learning environment: Good**

The school has a very positive ethos where diversity is recognized and valued. Pupils learn about cultures and faiths that are different from their own and display tolerant attitudes towards each other. There are appropriate policies, plans and procedures in place to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils.

Effective use is made of a good range of learning and teaching resources. The accommodation meets the needs of learners effectively. The outside areas, garden, and the high standard of the wall displays, provide the pupils with a stimulating learning environment. The site and building are of a very high quality and provide good accommodation for the number of pupils on role.

<b>Key Question 2: How good are leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>
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**Leadership: Good**

School leaders have a clear vision which is communicated effectively to staff, parents and pupils. The head teacher and senior management team provide a clear sense of direction and set high expectations for themselves and others. They have established a culture that strives for improvement. There is a very positive ethos of with all staff, governors and parents supporting the values of the school to benefit children. All staff with leadership roles carryout their responsibilities effectively. Performance management arrangements are well-established and they are carried out efficiently. The process identifies suitable targets for improvement that are well-matched to professional development activities.

Governors fulfill their statutory obligations and support the school well. They are well informed about pupils' performance and how this compares with the performance of pupils in other similar schools. Governors are becoming increasing involved in the school's self-evaluation processes such as monitoring and evaluating standards.



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The governing body has adopted an appropriate complaints procedure and ensures that this is appropriately explained to parents.

The school is receptive to new ideas and is very keen to seek new and innovative ways to improve its provision. The Foundation Phase has been very successfully established. The school is at the forefront of many national developments such as the implementation of the School Effectiveness Framework, extending pupil participation and in developing professional learning communities. The school is frequently used as an exemplar to others.

**Improving Quality: Good**

Overall, the process of self-evaluation and development planning is good. There is a clear whole-school approach to self-evaluation which draws on regular quality assurance procedures. A particular feature is the role pupils play in the process. Their recommendations are considered seriously and this has developed confidence in pupils to present ideas that have influenced changes.

The self-evaluation report, although comprehensive and detailed, tends to be descriptive rather than evaluative and therefore, in parts, lacks clear and concise judgements on outcomes. Although the school identifies some important areas for development the link between the self-evaluation report produced prior to the inspection and priorities in the school improvement plan (SIP) is not always clear.

The school has successfully addressed all of the recommendations of the last inspection report, however improvements in Welsh as a second language have not been fully realised.

The highly effective professional learning community within the school and beyond is an outstanding feature. This enables staff to develop and share innovative approaches to learning and teaching and to extend their professional knowledge purposefully and successfully. Staff and pupils from the school regularly share good practice with others. This aspect of the school's work has a significant impact the quality of provision and on pupil wellbeing in particular.

**Partnership working: Excellent**

The school has an excellent range of partnerships, which make a significant contribution to pupils' learning experiences. Staff take a leading role in developing joint working practices and have established very productive partnerships within the local family of schools and the nearby high school. The school's commitment to developing an innovative Virtual Learning Environment and use of on-line resources is recognised by others at cluster and LA and beyond.

The school is fully engaged with the WAG Schools Effectiveness Framework (SEF). These include the development of pupil engagement with the 'SEF Committee' and 'Pupil Ambassadors' scheme which support the work of the Youth Forum.

The school has established exceptionally good links with parents, individuals and organisations in the local community. The school is viewed as an integral part of the community life of the area providing a range of arrangements before and after school. It has achieved Investors in Families status, provides support for Family

Learning Projects in literacy and science and has been awarded its second 'Green Flag' award. The school has foundation level and intermediate level international school awards.

### **Resource management: Good**

Resource management is good. All teachers have appropriate knowledge and expertise to teach the curriculum effectively. Effective deployment of teaching staff contributes to the successful development of pupils' learning experiences. Support staff are deployed effectively to ensure that learning needs are met. The school meets the requirements for workforce remodelling and the use of planning, preparation and assessment time. School spending decisions relate well to priorities for improvement and the benefit of the pupils.

The school makes good use of the funding it receives and gives good value for money in securing good outcomes for pupils.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Fifteen parent questionnaires were returned and all expressed the view that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the school. All agree their children like school, feel safe and settle in well. All parents believe that their children are making good progress at the school. They say that staff expect the children to work hard and to do their best. All parents say that children behave well in school and that all are treated fairly and with respect. All parents say that children receive appropriate support in relation to any particular individual needs. All parents believe that their child is well prepared for moving on to the next school. Most parents feel they are well-informed about their child's progress and that they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints. All parents believe the school is well or very well run.

### **Responses to learner questionnaires**

One hundred and sixteen pupils completed the questionnaire. All say they feel safe in the school and nearly all know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset. Nearly all think that the school deals well with any bullying. They all say that the teachers and other adults help them learn and make progress and nearly all say that they know whom to ask if they find the work difficult. All pupils believe that they are doing well at school and most believe that homework helps them understand and improve their work. Nearly all say that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work. Most pupils think that other children behave well and that they can get their work done. Many say that children behave well at playtime and lunchtime but a few disagree.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Mr Merfyn Lloyd Jones	Reporting Inspector
Mr Goronwy Morris	Team Inspector
Mr Andrew Thorne	Peer Inspector
Mr Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Mrs Michelle Jones	School Nominee

### Contractor:

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## Copies of the report

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## Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

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