



*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 Gymraeg Cwmbrân  
Henllys Way  
St Dials  
Cwmbran  
Torfaen  
NP44 3NB**

**Date of inspection: November 2011**

**by**

**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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court  
Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW

or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)

**This report was translated by Trosol: Welsh to English**

**© Crown Copyright 2012: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.**

## Context

Ysgol Gymraeg Cwmbrân is a designated Welsh-medium primary school and is maintained by Torfaen local authority. Eighty-four per cent of pupils come from the town itself and the remaining 16% from a wider catchment area. The school describes the area which it serves as one that is industrial but which is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged.

There are 364 pupils between 3 and 11 years of age on roll, including 54 children of nursery school age who attend on a part-time basis. The school accepts pupils on a full-time basis in the September following their fourth birthday.

Ninety-nine per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is not spoken as the first language and 2% of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Approximately 22% of pupils are entitled to free school meals and this figure is slightly higher than both the county and national averages. Twenty-four per cent of pupils have special educational needs, of which one has a statement.

In 2011-2012, the individual school budget for Ysgol Gymraeg Cwmbrân is £2,893 per pupil which compares with a maximum of £7,173 and a minimum of £2,725 per pupil for primary schools in Torfaen. Ysgol Gymraeg Cwmbrân has the 27<sup>th</sup> highest budget per pupil of the 31 primary schools in Torfaen.

The current headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2003.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- most pupils make sound progress during their period in the school;
- the teaching is of a good standard in all classes;
- it provides a broad range of experiences that reinforce and stimulate the learning;
- it has demonstrated success in the development of bilingualism;
- there is a strong Welsh ethos, which is an integral part of every aspect of the life of the school; and
- there is an effective partnership with parents.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher and the deputy headteacher have a very good knowledge of the school and a clear vision for it;
- everyone works effectively as a team;
- through its effective procedures, the school has identified correctly specific aspects to be developed and implemented in the future; and
- leaders and managers have been successful in planning strategically and creating very effective systems for raising standards.

## Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 continue to improve the writing achievements of boys in the Foundation Phase;
- R2 continue to raise the proportion of levels 5 in key stage 2; and
- R3 share best teaching practices throughout the school.

### **What happens next?**

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how the school is going to address the recommendations.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

The results of the initial assessments of children when they begin in the school show that most of them have a good level of ability in the basic skills, with the exception of Welsh, which is new to almost all of them. Almost all pupils make good progress in the Foundation Phase in all areas of learning and excellent progress in Welsh.

The percentage of pupils who reached the expected level (level 2) in Welsh in key stage 1 in 2011 was above the average for similar schools and above the average for schools in Wales. The percentage of pupils who reached level 2 in mathematics was above the average for Wales and was as good as of the average for similar schools. In science, the percentage was above the average for Wales but below that for similar schools. In 2011, the results for girls were significantly higher than boys' results in writing in Welsh.

In 2011, the percentage of pupils who reached the expected level (level 4) in all subjects combined in key stage 2 was above the average for schools in Wales and above or close to the percentage for the family of similar schools. In general, the school's results in both key stages have risen gradually since 2008. The school's level 5 results have not been as good as those for similar schools in mathematics and science.

In 2011, there was a significant difference between the results for boys and girls in Welsh and English in level 5, with the boys' results being substantially lower than the girls' results.

The current work in pupils' books shows obvious progress in the standards of skills in general throughout the school. Most pupils use their skills effectively across the curriculum.

Most pupils throughout the school listen intently during lessons. They are keen to contribute to discussions and respond to teachers' questions effectively. The majority of pupils in the early years pronounce and intonate intelligibly, and have a wide range of vocabulary and a good measure of accuracy when using it.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, many pupils are able to converse confidently and clearly in differently contexts. They discuss familiar experiences and events confidently on an individual level and as members of a group. Throughout key stage 2, most pupils ask relevant questions and respond sensibly to other pupils' contributions. At the top of school, most pupils speak confidently in a variety of contexts. They present information clearly and effectively and show a good grasp of the natural syntax of the spoken language.

The standard of reading of most pupils in both languages is appropriate to their age and ability. In the Foundation Phase, pupils are familiar with a range of reading

strategies and are able to use them purposefully. By the end of the Foundation Phase, most pupils are able to understand what they read and can express an opinion and discuss the content of books. They read aloud with increasing fluency, accuracy, emphasis and expression. In key stage 2, most pupils show an understanding of a wide range of subjects and are able to respond meaningfully to their content. They read a wide range of materials with fluency across the curriculum and they can select specific excerpts from books for use within their work.

The development of writing across the school is generally good with the majority of pupils producing effective extended pieces of work. The development of writing across activities in the Foundation Phase in Welsh shows obvious progress in a short period of time. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils write clearly and interestingly in a wide range of forms and for a variety of purposes.

In the Foundation Phase, in 2011, there was a significant difference between the writing results for boys and girls, with the girls performing better. A higher percentage of girls than boys reached level 5 in both languages in key stage 2.

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals, pupils with additional learning needs, pupils in care and those from ethnic minority backgrounds are making progress that is appropriate to their age and ability.

Although Welsh is the second language of almost all pupils in the school, they all deal with the Welsh language confidently very soon after starting in the school. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is core to the work and ethos of the school.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Almost every pupil has a good awareness of the importance of eating healthily. They participate regularly in keep fit activities and physical exercise within the school and in after-school clubs. They make purposeful use of additional play equipment on the school playground.

All of the pupils feel safe in the school, and they know whom to turn to if they have a problem. They confide in each other and, through the effective procedure of the Friendly Crew, pupils know they can support each other. The behaviour of most pupils is good and they show respect and consideration to each other and to adults. They are all enthusiastic learners who can work effectively in groups. They show enjoyment and pleasure in their work and persevere with their tasks for extended periods.

The attendance percentage has shown a gradual increase from 92% in 2007, to 94% currently.

The school council and the Eco council make a significant contribution to the school's activities. Through their efforts, they have influenced activities such as establishing a salad bar for lunch time and taking an active role during the health promotion week.

Pupils regularly participate in concerts, services and eisteddfodau. Almost all pupils across the age range take advantage of these opportunities and develop confidence.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>
---

<b>Good</b>
-------------

### **Learning experiences: Good**

The school provides a wide range of valuable learning experiences for its pupils within lessons and through visits. These visits to the community and visits from members of the community make a positive contribution to enriching pupils' experiences.

Through thorough joint planning, teachers ensure appropriate consistency and progression in education. Pupils are given a role in planning for each term which contributes effectively to their desire to discover and learn.

Stimulating opportunities are planned for pupils to develop and to use their skills confidently across the curriculum. Effective use is made of computers and information and communication technology resources to enrich pupils' experiences.

One of the school's strengths is the way in which it plans for immersing pupils in the Welsh language. The method that the school uses to develop Welsh and bilingualism in all pupils is excellent. There are extremely successful systems in place in order to encourage pupils to learn and to use Welsh. The majority of older pupils appreciate the advantages of learning Welsh and becoming increasingly bilingual.

The way in which the school delivers the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is a strong feature of the school's work. All pupils' understanding of the industrial, social and economic features of Wales are enriched effectively through events, such as special celebration days and naming classes after famous Welsh people.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship permeates the school's curricular plans. The school's links with the local community and local businesses provides valuable experiences for pupils of the world of work and enterprise and business activities.

### **Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations and teaching aims and success criteria are used constantly. The range of methods and resources used are effective in motivating and challenging pupils to do their best. In general, all pupils are encouraged regularly to work independently but in some lessons too much guidance for pupils impedes their development as independent learners.

All of the teachers have established a good working relationship with the pupils. The effective co-operation between the teaching staff and the support staff enriches and enhances the learning experiences in the classroom. Through the effective action of assistants on the intervention programmes, there is obvious progress in the achievement of specific cohorts of pupils.



The school is working diligently to develop assessment for learning methods and the principles and strategies that are used set clear targets for pupils to improve their work. The school has robust assessment systems to summarise pupils' progress.

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

There are effective policies and procedures in place to ensure the health and wellbeing of all pupils. The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. The joint worship sessions contribute significantly to creating a prayerful, caring and spiritual atmosphere. A broad range of varied and rich experiences are provided to develop pupils' understanding of the cultural richness of Wales and beyond. Through the efforts of the choir, the school has gained success at national and international levels.

A good relationship exists between the school and relevant external agencies in order to ensure appropriate provision for every pupil.

The provision for personal and social education is planned appropriately within the work of the classes. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility for the health and wellbeing of their fellow pupils and they take pride in their roles. Thorough procedures are in place to eliminate and deal with any elements of bullying.

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

The thorough systems that are in place for pupils with additional learning needs are very effective. Such pupils are identified quickly and appropriate additional support is ensured through using a variety of stimulating programmes. The school has special arrangements for targeting pupils who are underachieving. They receive purposeful additional assistance in order to ensure progress in their literacy skills. The plans provided for pupils are reviewed regularly and modified following consultation with parents.

### **Learning environment: Good**

One of the main strengths of the school is its Welshness and Welsh language ethos, which is created extremely effectively throughout the school. The school is a close and caring community that provides equal opportunities for all pupils. The curriculum enables all pupils to benefit fully from all aspects of the educational experiences that are provided.

The children's good behaviour is managed through nurturing a very caring and positive ethos.

The school makes good use of the building. A colourful, stimulating atmosphere has been created successfully which nurtures pupils' pride in their work. Pupils have contributed ideas towards developing the school site and are very proud of this contribution.

The whole site is kept clean and tidy.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>
--

<b>Good</b>
-------------

**Leadership: Good**

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong, strategic leadership to the life and work of the school. The senior management team makes good use of the data analysis on pupils' performance. The information is used effectively in the self-evaluation process in order to determine priorities in the school development plan.

The governing body provides good support for the school through a wide range of duties. The governors are aware of the school's priorities and aspects of pupils' performance. They have suitable committees and effective structures in place to oversee financial management, policy reviews and school procedures, which ensures that the statutory requirements are met. They act as a critical friend appropriately.

The roles and responsibilities of members of staff have been defined clearly and are understood by all members.

The school's initiatives to meet local and national priorities are developing very effectively. Prominent attention is given to developing the Welsh language, pupils' welfare and implementing the principles of the Foundation Phase.

**Improving quality: Good**

The school uses a wide range of procedures to appraise its work, and gives appropriate consideration to the opinions of parents, members of staff and pupils. Leaders and members of staff respect the views of pupils and adopt ideas that they propose.

The self-evaluation process is thorough, valid and is based firmly on direct evidence. The school monitors teaching and learning thoroughly and analyses a broad range of attainment data of different groups of pupils and examines their work.

The self-evaluation report is a comprehensive document that identifies clearly the elements that are obvious strengths and those areas that need to be developed further.

The arrangements for whole-staff performance management are effective and lead to meeting the staff's professional training needs. The school's internal professional teaching community ensure staff development and that they share relevant information on a regular basis. Effective networks of professional practice with other schools and partners are developing well.

**Partnership working: Good**

The school works effectively with a wide range of partners, which has a beneficial effect on pupils' wellbeing and attainment. There are very strong links with parents, which influence the success of children and the school. Valuable links are fostered with local businesses which promote a good awareness of entrepreneurial skills.

A good relationship exists with other local schools including the Cylch Meithrin and the secondary school. Purposeful arrangements have been established in order to standardise and improve standards.

The school has effective partnerships with a range of external agencies to meet the specific needs of individual and groups of pupils. Good partnerships with a number of the local authority's agencies such as the speech and language therapy service have a very positive effect on the development of pupils' wellbeing and attainment.

**Resource management: Good**

The school manages its resources very well. There is a good range of resources for learning and teaching. There are sufficient experienced members of staff and the school makes effective use of staff specialisms to provide rich experiences for pupils and to improve their wellbeing and their results.

Through detailed and careful management of finances, the school has succeeded in investing extensively in developing the school's stimulating internal and external areas.

The school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Comments on performance data

The percentage of pupils who reached the expected level (level 2) in oracy, reading and writing in Welsh in key stage 1 in 2011 was above the average for schools in Wales and above the average for the family of similar schools. The percentage of pupils who reached the expected level in mathematics was above the average for schools in Wales and about the same as the average for the family of schools. In science, the percentage was above the average for Wales but below that of the family of schools.

In terms of the expected performance in Welsh or English, mathematics and science combined, the school's results in key stage 1 were above the average for Wales and the family of schools. These results placed the school amongst the top 25% of similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. The school was in the upper 50% for Welsh and mathematics but in the lower 50% for science.

The percentage exceeding the expected level (level 3 or above) in 2011 in key stage 1 was below the family of schools and all-Wales averages in Welsh and below the family of schools average in mathematics and science.

There is a significant difference in the results for boys and girls in some areas. Girls' results are significantly better than those of boys in writing Welsh and in level 3 science. In level 3 mathematics, boys' results are significantly higher than girls' results.

Over four years, key stage 1 pupils' results have increased gradually in Welsh since 2008. An improvement was seen on the results for the family of schools with the exception of 2010. Results in Welsh have placed the school consistently in the top 50% of schools, with the exception of 2010.

The oracy and reading results have shown a gradual upward trend since 2006 but, since 2008-2009, the most substantial change has been in writing.

In mathematics, since 2008, the results have been fairly consistently close to the results of the family of schools. There has been a slight downward trend in the level 3 results since 2006-2007.

The science results have increased gradually since 2006-2007, and have continued to be close to or slightly below the average results for the family of schools and for Wales, since 2008-2009. The school's results for level 3 were above the averages for the family of schools and for Wales in 2009-2010, but below them for 2011.

The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in all subjects and the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science combined) in key stage 2 in 2011 was above the average for schools in

Wales and above or close to the average for the results of the family of similar schools.

The school compares favourably with similar schools in terms of being benchmarked against schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. The school is amongst the top 25% in Welsh, English and the core subject indicator and amongst the upper 50% in mathematics and science.

The percentage achieving beyond the expected level in 2011 in key stage 2 was above the family of schools and all-Wales averages in Welsh and English and above the all-Wales average in mathematics, but below the family and all-Wales averages in science.

The results for key stage 2 pupils in Welsh and English for the past four years have been fairly constant with the school's results being consistently above family of schools and all-Wales averages since 2008. The school's level 5 results have been consistently above the averages for the family of schools and Wales since 2008, with the exception of 2010, when there was a substantial decline.

In 2011, there was a significant difference between the results for boys and girls in Welsh and English at level 5, with the boys' results substantially lower than the girls' results.

In mathematics, the results have been fairly consistent, being above the family of schools and all-Wales averages since 2008. Since 2008, the level 5 results have been generally lower, with the exception of 2009, and below the all-Wales average in 2008 and 2010.

The science results have been constant since 2008, either similar to or above the average for the family of schools and, in general, better than the average for Wales. Since 2008, the level 5 results have been fairly constant, but slightly below the family and all-Wales averages, except in 2009 when there was a 42.9% increase.

There are no obvious differences in the data at the end of both key stages associated with specific groups of pupils, such as pupils who are entitled to free school meals, pupils with additional learning needs, pupils in care or those from ethnic minority backgrounds. On the whole, these pupils succeed in reaching levels that are commensurate with their ability.

## Appendix 2

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Forty-nine responses were received. Everyone states that their children are safe in school, that they have been supported to settle in well and that they are encouraged to be healthy and to undertake physical exercise regularly. Everyone is also of the opinion that the school helps the children to become more mature and to shoulder responsibilities and that they behave well at school. Parents/carers state that they receive information regularly, that the teaching is good and that the school is well run.

Almost all parents are satisfied with the progress of their children and are of the opinion that the school provides a good variety of activities for them. They believe that the staff treat all children fairly and with respect and provide additional support as required.

#### **Responses to learner questionnaires**

The questionnaire was completed by 103 key stage 2 pupils. All of the pupils state they are happy and that they feel safe in the school. They state that the school teaches them how to be healthy and that teachers and other adults within the school help them to make progress. They also know what to do and whom to talk to if they find the work difficult.

Almost all the pupils are of the opinion that they are doing well in school, that there are ample opportunities for them to undertake physical exercise regularly and that they have enough resources in order to do their work.

Many of the pupils noted that behaviour is good in the school and that misbehaviour does not affect their ability to work.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Glyn Roberts	Reporting Inspector
Carolyn Thomas	Team Inspector
Terry Williams	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Llinos Mary Jones	Peer Inspector
Catrin Evans	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

Under the Education Act 2005, 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.

## 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