



# ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS 2018-2019

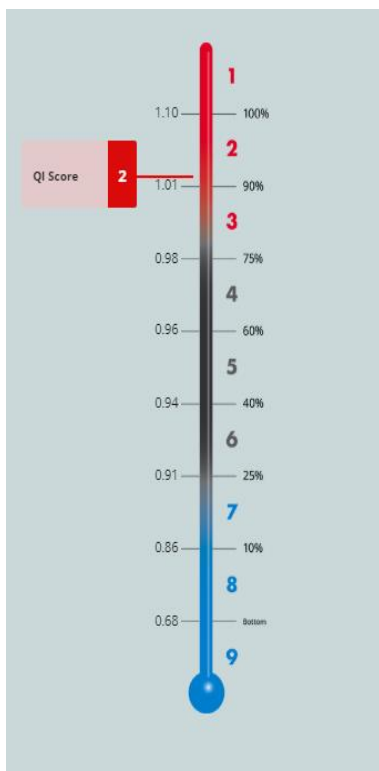


*The school is a caring community in which all pupils are included fully in all aspects of school life.*

*Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni is a community that has an inclusive, friendly, Welsh ethos. It has an extremely strong sense of belonging, co-operation and shared aspirations. There is a spirit of industriousness and enthusiasm, which is fostered by all staff and pupils.*

*The school provides exceptional experiences for all pupils in order to expand their horizons and promote pride in their heritage and culture.*

ESTYN 2016



The Post 16 Results are a source of pride for the whole school community and we would like to congratulate our pupils and staff, once again, for their dedication and hard work. This means that the school has achieved its best ever results, across all comparators and this is defined as an exceptional performance:

- Places the school's performance for A-level courses in the **top 10%** of schools, across England and Wales, when considering the ALPS quality indicator
- The school's performance for level 3 vocational courses places it in the **top 1%** of schools, across England and Wales, when considering the ALPS quality indicator

## Post 16 key indicators – Summer 2019

Percentage of all grades that are A*-A	28.50%
Percentage of all grades that are A*-B	65.89%
Percentage of all grades that are A*-C	87.85%
Percentage of students achieving at least 3 grades A*-A	15.28%
Percentage of all examinations sat through <b>the medium of Welsh across Caerphilly</b>	20%
Percentage of all A*-A grades <b>across Caerphilly</b> achieved by Cwm rhymni students	30.77%
Percentage of all Lefel 3 BTEC grades D*-D	95.65%
Percentage of all Lefel 3 BTEC grades D*-M	100%

## Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni is an Amber School in accordance with the national categorisation system for 2018

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## **Introduction**

At present we have 1753<sup>1</sup> pupils but we expect this number to increase, approaching 1800, by September 2020. It is expected that there will be over 2000 pupils at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni by 2023.

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni is the only school in Caerphilly which has the capacity to teach the Key Stage Three (KS3) Curriculum and develop 14-19 Learning Pathways through the medium of Welsh. We therefore teach a very wide variety of subjects in order that we may satisfy the National Curriculum and the Skills Measure with all these subjects being taught through the medium of the Welsh language.

All pupils are expected to have the opportunity to achieve their potential and to develop as full members of society through Welsh medium education. To achieve this we must develop the individual in the context of our national culture, which takes its place in European and world culture.

It is the quality of the pupils' experiences that define the success of the school. If we can ensure that every pupil receives educational experiences of the highest standard we will be achieving excellent Welsh medium education. We concentrate on strategies that aim to achieve improvement in pupils' progress and outstanding standards in teaching and learning.

The school professional learning strategy has proven to be very effective as we have linked it directly to the school development plan and performance management. Sharing good practice amongst our staff has proven to be popular and effective. We respect the expertise and progressiveness of all our staff by giving them a voice in the way the school develops.

The school's ethos ensures that our young staff can see that it is possible to develop by showing progressiveness within a team culture. Through good teaching and learning in the classroom and developing the extended pastoral and curricular activities they can gain greater professional satisfaction. The school's systems for performance management, middle management and senior management concentrate on the need for continuous praise of very good teachers in the classroom.

We do not see the various Key Stage Curricula as independent elements within the school. We expect every teacher to be keen to teach across all Key Stages and across the range of academic abilities. We encourage flexibility in the use of teaching methods and strategies. We welcome mental flexibility and a collaborative approach to all aspects of school life. Even though we appoint specialist teachers to teach specific subjects, our educational strategy emphasises the need for very good teachers to be flexible and to teach the extended curriculum including some subjects they may not specialise in.

Every classroom teacher is expected to register a group of pupils thus contributing towards the school's pastoral and progress monitoring strategy. We appoint very good, enthusiastic and progressive teachers who are keen to contribute towards all elements of school life. We prioritise the development of the individual and therefore we expect the staff as well as the pupils to achieve their potential.

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<sup>1</sup> September 2019

## Estyn monitoring visit February 2019



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is increasing the level of follow-up activity.

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement. The school will produce an action plan indicating how it will address the recommendations.

Estyn will re-visit the school after receiving the action plan, to ensure that it is suitable and likely to drive the required improvement. Inspectors will visit the school again in approximately 12 months' time to monitor progress in addressing the recommendations.

Estyn were reporting on the schools response to the Estyn recommendations resulting from the Estyn inspection in 2016:

R1. Improve performance in key stage 4, especially among the pupils who are eligible for free school meals

R2. Improve attendance levels

R3. Reduce the variation in teaching by continuing to share the best practices that exist in the school

## Post-ESTYN inspection response plan priorities – Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni 2019-20

### R1 - Improve performance in key stage 4, especially among the pupils who are eligible for free school meals

#### Success criteria – KS4 examination standards

- Leaders have established clear strategic plans to identify and respond to a lack of improvement in standards.
- Self-evaluation procedures are robust and successful in assessing, tracking and monitoring pupils' progress.
- Robust arrangements are in place to monitor quality and secure accountability. As a result, leaders have prioritised appropriately thus ensuring that the improvement plans are strategic and timely.
- Leadership has had a positive impact on standards.
- Pupils' performance matches or exceeds modelled outcomes in each of the key performance indicators.
- Most of the pupils achieve, or exceed, the expected progress, considering their starting positions, and achieve their individual targets at subject level.
- The school's average capped 9 point score compares favourably with similar schools.
- The literacy measure (Welsh/English) compares favourably with similar schools including boys' and girls' performance; most of the pupils make the expected progress when compared with their starting positions.
- The numeracy measure (mathematics/numeracy) compares favourably with similar schools and most of the pupils make the expected progress when compared with their starting positions.
- The science measure compares favourably with similar schools and most of the pupils achieve the expected progress when compared with their starting positions.
- The Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate compares favourably with similar schools and most of the pupils achieve their individual targets.
- Alps data demonstrates that most of the pupils achieve, or exceed, the expected progress in non-core subjects and achieve their individual targets.
- FSM pupils' performance compares favourably with other pupils at similar schools in all the key performance indicators.
- The 5A \*-A measure is over 15% and almost every targeted pupil achieves the measure.

#### Success criteria – lesson standards

- Many pupils successfully provide extended verbal contributions and make effective use of a range of vocabulary.
- Many pupils have the ability to analyse the effect of writing techniques used within reading pieces e.g. by authors in literary tasks and more broadly across the curriculum.
- Many pupils write correctly across the curriculum, with particular regard to punctuation.
- Many pupils successfully write extended pieces independently.
- Most of the KS3 pupils develop their advanced digital competence skills using sophisticated computer programmes which are age and ability appropriate.
- The majority of pupils develop their independence, resilience and perseverance by completing their work across the subjects.
- Many pupils develop their thinking skills well across the range of subjects.
- Almost all pupils settle quickly and demonstrate high levels of commitment and willingness to learn in their work whilst maintaining a good level of interest during lessons.

### R2. Improve attendance levels

#### Success criteria:

- Whole school attendance strategies are effective and strategic and are communicated clearly to all staff. These are implemented regularly as a result.
- Robust plans are in place to evaluate the impact of the various strategies on attendance across the school and plans are refined as required.
- Pupils' attendance compares favourably with similar schools and the school has achieved the following challenging attendance targets:
- There have been fewer exclusions and the three-year trend is downwards.
- Effective systems to improve attendance lead to improved outcomes for pupils [Also see A1]

### **R3. Reduce the variation in teaching by continuing to share the best practices that exist in the school**

#### **Success criteria:**

##### **Self-evaluation and improvement planning:**

- Senior leaders ensure and implement accurate whole school self-evaluation processes which are effective in identifying strengths as well as areas for development.
- The whole school development plan clearly highlights the correct actions in order to respond to the priorities and they are communicated effectively. Robust plans are in place to monitor and ensure the rate of progress made.
- Most departments have established self-evaluation processes and systems which allow them to effectively identify and share best practice as well as the areas for improvement.
- Most departments' improvement plans are based on accurate and robust self-evaluation processes.
- Most of the departments have improvement plans which are monitored, evaluated and refined systematically.
- Effective systems for self-evaluation and improvement planning lead to better outcomes for pupils, and as a result, most make, or exceed, the expected progress. [See also A1]
- All year 7 pupils receive a new curriculum which corresponds to the 'Curriculum for Wales'.
- All KS3 pupils receive a new health and wellbeing curriculum which is designed to develop the 4 purposes.
- As a result of working with the cluster schools, the new curriculum is cohesive and reflects the 'Curriculum for Wales.'

##### **Ensure appropriate challenge and ambition for all:**

- Lesson observations, learning walks and book sampling demonstrate that most lessons are planned effectively to ensure appropriate challenge and ambition for all pupil groups, including the most talented.
- The school prioritises MAT pupils by ensuring learning experiences and extra-curricular activities which raise their ambition and aspirations taking into consideration their current learning and long term development.
- Pupil voice activities demonstrate that most pupils are given high levels of challenge during lessons and their commitment reflects this.
- The performance of MAT pupils is in line with that of similar pupils in other schools, taking into consideration national test data (130+), the 5A\*-A GCSE measure, C9PS a 3A\*-A at A level. [See also A1]

##### **Improve teachers' questioning strategies and the way they plan to develop thinking skills:**

- The school has effective strategies, which are communicated to all, in taking into consideration the development of pupils' thinking skills. This is implemented well by most leaders.
- All teachers clearly consider effective questioning strategies when developing pupils' thinking skills.
- Lesson observations, learning walks, book sampling and pupil voice activities demonstrate that teachers' questioning is effective in most lessons and includes a variety of questioning strategies including probing questions which encourage pupils to answer at length.
- Evidence gathering activities demonstrate that most teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' thinking skills, in line with their age and ability.

##### **Improve the consistency of written feedback from teachers:**

- All teachers clearly understand the whole school marking policy, especially the way feedback is given to pupils (AMAG); and most teachers implement this regularly.
- Book sampling, lesson observations and learning walks demonstrate that most teachers deliver beneficial written feedback to pupils.
- Many teachers plan 'follow-up' opportunities through AMAG and monitor the progress made by pupils through developing triple marking.
- Pupil voice demonstrates that most pupils agree that feedback (verbal or written) from their teachers is effective in moving the learning forward.

## Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni Self-Appraisal against Estyn recommendations

### **R1. Improve performance in key stage 4, especially among the pupils who are eligible for free school meals**

Based on teacher assessments at Key Stage 3, there is an upward trend for all core subjects at levels 5+ and 6+. The school's performance is above modelled outcomes.

Although the performance of boys, when considering level 5+, has declined in the last year for almost all measures, the three year trend is upwards. The performance of girls has increased since last year and the trend is up for almost every measure. When considering the level 6+ measure the performance of boys and girls shows an upward trend for almost all measures.

Over the last three years the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals who achieve a level 5+ measure has increased for almost all measures. Although the performance of the same group of pupils has declined since last year when considering the level 6+ measure, the trend is positive over time.

At Key Stage 4, performance has improved significantly within majority performance measures since the results of 2018. The progress made in considering a minority of the main performance measures is adequate. In comparison with similar schools, although performance over time varies, there is an upward trend for many (most) of the measures.

The CAP 9 measure in 2019 performance equated to a score of 353 points, compared with 335 points in 2018. This places the school's performance below modelled outcome schools as well as those of similar schools.

For the new numeracy measure the school's performance equates to 39.5 points. This places the school above modelled outcomes and also above the Wales average. (37 points) The school ranks 4th in the family of similar schools.

For the new literacy measure the school's performance equates to 42.3 points. This places the school above modelled outcomes and also above the Wales average. (39 points) The school ranks 3rd in the family of similar schools.

For the new science measure the school's performance equates to 38.0 points. This places the school just below modelled outcomes but above the Wales average. (37 points) The school ranks 5th in the family of similar schools.

For the new Skills Challenge Welsh Baccalaureate measure the school's performance equates to 38.1 points. This places the school just below modelled outcomes but above the Wales average. (36.4 points) The school ranks 9th in the family of similar schools.

In the indicator that includes five GCSEs at grades A\*-A results have increased by 2.8 percentage points to 14.7% in 2019. However, the school's performance is below modelled results and the Welsh average. (18.1%) The school is ranked 6th in the family of similar schools.

For the indicator that includes five GCSEs at grades A \* -C including English or Welsh, and mathematics, the school has made significant progress as results rose by 12.9 percentage points to 64.9% in 2019. Performance above outcomes has improved modelled as well as the Welsh

average. The school is ranked 2nd within the family of similar schools. No difference was observed in the school's performance when including literature courses in this measure.

The school has performed above the family for most of the main performance indicators, with the exception of the CAP9, the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge, and the five GCSE grades A\*-A.

When comparing FSM pupil outcomes, the school performs better than the family of schools within most of the indicators. The school's performance is above modelled outcomes for a minority of the main indicators.

When comparing the school's performance since the arrival of the new GCSE courses in 2017, performance has improved within many of the main performance measures. There is significant progress in considering the five GCSEs at grades A \* -C including English or Welsh and maths, mathematics and numeracy level 2, Welsh level 2 and the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge measure.

However, performance has not improved since 2017 when considering the level 1 threshold, the CAP9, and measuring five GCSEs at grades A \* -A.

With the exception of the numeracy points score, girls' performance is above that of boys for all of the new performance measures. In 2019, boys' performance was above that of boys in other schools for many of the performance measures. However the performance of girls is below that of girls in other schools for many of the new measures.

Many pupils have sound writing skills. They successfully write with accuracy, including appropriate spelling and a good range of punctuation. They use sound subject language and terminology, writing for different purposes and different audiences e.g. when writing at length on US Isolationism Policy in a history lesson and autumn monologue in Welsh lessons.

Many organize and structure their writing successfully and use paragraphing correctly. They succeed in writing at length and apply their skills well across the curriculum within various contexts, e.g. especially within their geography, history, religious studies and science lessons.

A few pupils write inaccurately which includes basic spelling mistakes and a lack of punctuation. Very few pupils use language resources (e.g. language pyramids in religious education and history lessons) skilfully to reinforce their core literacy skills. They are able to produce extended writing of a very high quality as a result but generally have not seen much use of such resources. A few pupils are dependent on scaffolding and worksheets, and so do not develop their independent writing skills effectively enough.

When reading many pupils have sound basic skills. They are confident in using a range of reading strategies, e.g. while skimming notes on dissolving in a science lesson. We saw evidence of more able pupils explaining the effect of writing techniques competently, e.g. the impact of stylistic features in their Welsh lessons. However, a minority of pupils know the techniques mechanically and are not able to fully explain their effect.

Many pupils contribute extended oral responses of good quality, making good use of subject terminology. They express themselves eloquently using fluent Welsh, explaining their logic in a



mature and intelligent way, e.g. when evaluating and reporting back to their peers on performances in Welsh Baccalaureate; drama and physical education lessons.

Many pupils have sound number skills and in this way can apply them to different contexts in a discrete and wise way. Very good examples of pupils doing this were observed in a geography lesson (data handling), and when solving numerical code in a science lesson but pupils were not generally observed applying their number skills in a wide enough range of new or unfamiliar contexts.

Many pupils have the ability to choose a suitable method when completing mental calculations, and make good use of written methods to check their answers. They do so in a natural and skilful way. However, a very few pupils are over-dependent on the use of calculators, and therefore do not develop their core skills and confidence sufficiently.

During lessons where creativity is the focus many pupils take advantage of opportunities to adeptly develop their skills in this area, e.g. when composing a pop song in a music lesson, and in developing a group gymnastics sequence.

Most pupils are able to work together effectively hold mature discussions in groups. They show respect for each other and can use the comments of their peers effectively and purposefully to improve their standard of work.

In about half the lessons, pupils develop their thinking skills successful. Valuable resources are used to work independent e.g. mind cubes, and de Bono hats in their English and Welsh lessons.

Most pupils make good use of Welsh during lessons. They show respect for the language and express themselves in an eloquent and competent manner.

## **R2. Improve attendance levels**

### **Attitudes to learning**

Nearly all pupils show positive attitudes to their work and their behaviour for learning is very good. They complete various activities very successfully, working in a variety of different ways including group and independent work.

Many pupils have the skills to improve their own learning and in this way are successful in moving the learning to the next stage. They apply their skills to different contexts, especially their literacy skills, and through this they take advantage of opportunities to undertake new / unfamiliar experiences.

Nearly all pupils show very high levels of resilience and perseverance, and many show a desire to complete their work to the best of their ability, e.g. when dealing with an extended question of motion and distance / time graphs in their mathematics lessons.

### **Attendance**

Cwm Rhymni is in the most 'deprived' (**according to Welsh Government measures**) family of Welsh medium schools, with the three Welsh schools in the EAS region at the top of the list. (i.e. the most deprived schools.)

In 2018/19 Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni's attendance percentage was 95.2% which is approximately 1.1 percentage points above modelled outcomes (94.1%). A strong improvement (0.9 percentage points) is made compared with 2017/18 and 0.2 percentage points above modelled outcome.

When considering our family of schools we are ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, significantly higher than our expected position of 9th. The mean attendance of our family of schools 2018-19 was 94.3%. This means we are some 0.9% above this figure, which suggests that we have made significant progress since 2016/17 (1.2 percentage points). Moving from quartile 4 to quartile 1.

In particular, the strategic role of the 'Wellbeing and Attendance Coordinator' 2018/19 has been developed which focuses on co-ordinating and implementing strategies across the school. Data is analysed and previous years' registers are scrutinized successfully to identify patterns and trends, and to develop creative strategies. These are shared innovatively throughout the school with staff, pupils and their parents. There is a very positive impact as a result of this extremely effective work. The Attendance rate for the September to October 2019/20 half term (96.2%) has improved significantly since the same period in 2017/18 (95.5%). The trend in the attendance of FSM-claiming pupils is up slightly when considering the September to October half term (92.1%). It has risen 0.3 percentage points since 2015/2016 (91.82%)

### **Percentage of half day sessions attended (no absences considered)**

Boys' attendance is above the girls' attendance in school by about 0.3 percentage points in 2018/19 which is slightly above the All Wales pattern. The gap is similar to last year's gap where good progress is being made compared to the last two years. The boys have performed better than the girls in three out of the last four years. However, the attendance figure for girls (95.0%) is above the LA girls' figure (94.0%), All Wales (93.8%) and our family of schools average (94.3%). The same is true for the boys' attendance figure (95.3%) which is above the LA figure (94.0%), All Wales (93.8%) and the average for our family's schools (94.3%). This is an element of strength.

These figures have been secured by the comprehensive strategies put in place. A purpose-built welfare room has been developed and pupils who are occasionally but regularly absent throughout the academic year will be targeted. Of the 197 pupils using the welfare room in 2018/19, about half were there due to a mental health difficulty (mainly anxiety or depression). Beneficial opportunities are developed within the welfare room for these pupils to attend school and receive an effective education even where in the past they have been absent. This strategy has been successful in complementing improvements in school attendance.

A number of other strategies have had a powerful impact on the progress of pupils' attendance;

The well-being and progress team work proficiently to target specific groups of pupils; There have been comprehensive weekly meetings between the welfare co-ordinator and the welfare leaders to discuss attendance; special reward strategies are conducted every half term; there is effective communication with parents and pupils through Parent Mail, Parent Forum, newsletters and regular meetings; Effective implementation of the 'Cwm Rhymni Callio' strategy; Attendance strategies are shared successfully throughout the school and actions have been implemented enthusiastically by all staff.

When considering unauthorized absences, the trends are down since 2016-17. The actions of our welfare and attendance coordinator, our office administration team and the welfare team have been effective in responding to unauthorized absences. Consistent use is made of 'Parent Mail' to communicate and target parents and pupils.

Our girls' unauthorized absence percentage is just above the LA and All Wales figure. The school has developed a new valuable attendance progress monitoring system in September 2018 where the registration teachers have been monitoring, implementing and reporting on a weekly basis on individuals who have not returned an authorized reason.

### **Attendance by FSM or Non FSM pupils**

Over the years the gap between the attendance of FSM and non-FSM pupils has varied. Although FSM pupil attendance has declined in 2017/18 the attendance of these pupils is better than recorded in the 2016 inspection. The FSM pupil attendance trend is upwards.

The attendance percentage of our FSM pupils 2018/19 (90.2%) is above the national trend (89.5%) and the average for similar schools (89.8%). This figure means that the attendance percentage of our FSM pupils is equal second when compared with similar schools. This is a positive element.

### **Regular absence (> 20%)**

The percentage of half day sessions missed due to regular absence (14.1%) has decreased since last year and is significantly lower than the LA average (23.4%), All Wales (25.9%) and also the average for our family of schools (21.4%). When considering similar schools we are ranked 2nd which is above our expected position. The trend of the percentage of pupils absent regularly has decreased over the years and certainly since the inspection in 2016.

The strategies put in place in 2018/19 to reduce exclusions have proven to be highly effective. The number of days lost due to exclusions in 2018/19 (176) shows a significant decrease on 2017/18 (623 days). In the September to October 2019/20 half term 21.5 days were lost to exclusions, compared to 2018/19 (66 days) and 2017/18 (42.5 days).

Overall we are producing a significant improvement in attendance levels and with a three year upward trend. Our strategies are having a very strong impact and we have developed the capacity across the school to maintain and develop these strategies.

### **R3. Reduce the variation in teaching by continuing to share the best practices that exist in the school**

In almost every lesson a very effective working relationship was observed between teachers and pupils. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and during most lessons they succeed in engaging pupils.

During many lessons teachers plan lessons that provide an appropriate level of challenge. However, during a few lessons the most able pupils were not sufficiently challenged and this is an area for development.

In the few outstanding lessons, teachers take advantage of the special working relationship and succeed in motivating the pupils to work diligently and elicit extended responses from them which force pupils to explain their logic skilfully, e.g. in a maths lesson while explaining the steps of their calculation methods. Appropriate challenge was planned and effectively differentiated for individual pupils. In these lessons pupils make very good progress. However, in the few adequate lessons, teachers' expectations are not high enough and the challenge does not allow pupils to fulfil their potential. These lessons tend to be too teacher-centred and pupils do not develop their independence.

In the majority of lessons open-ended questioning is a strength and this helps to foster interest, curiosity and motivation from the pupils, and so they succeed in offering extended responses of a very high quality.

Most teachers' marking is current, occurs regularly, and contains useful targets for pupils. Many teachers write effective diagnostic targets that clearly explain to pupils what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. Most teachers plan valuable opportunities for pupils to follow up on their comments, through 'AMAG', which leads to good progress. A minority of teachers plan very high quality 'AMAG' sessions, which include opportunities for pupils to respond at length to their teachers' feedback. They make significant progress as a result. Overall, there was less variation in the 'AMAG' across the school, especially when considering progress by MFL (KS3) and the vocational department. (Health and Social Care in particular)

Many lessons across the curriculum found strong provision for developing pupils' skills. All pupils receive valuable opportunities to develop their literacy skills in particular. However, the provision for digital competence is less obvious and the school needs to continue to plan strategically to improve this.

Some purposeful numeracy tasks were seen within subjects such as science and geography. However, little evidence of this was seen within the lessons observed.

Within mathematics lessons, the provision prepares pupils well for work involving number, measuring and handling data. However, a minority of lessons tend to be too teacher-centred and as a result pupils do not have enough opportunities to think for themselves and practise their skills sufficiently. In general, these pupils do not develop into independent mathematicians.

## School growth

The following table shows expected growth for the school:

	Gellihaf	Gwyndy	
2027	1290	875	2165
2026	1284	867	2151
2025	1283	836	2119
2024	1283	814	2096
2023	1267	770	2037
2022	1261	723	1984
2021	1241	686	1927
2020	1208	601	1809
2019	1219	521	1740
2018	1164	520	1684
2017	1157	476	1633
2016	1164	376	1540
2015	1228	283	1511
2014	1258	181	1439
2013	1380	85	1465
2012	1385		1385
2011	1433		1433

### **The National Curriculum in Cwm Rhymni<sup>2</sup>**

*The school works especially well with the wider community through specific activities locally, nationally and internationally.*

*Provision for the Welsh dimension and the Welsh language is an especially strong element.*

The school provides:

- *a very effective curriculum that meets statutory requirements for all pupils.*
- *an especially good choice of extra-curricular activities for pupils, which includes specific interest clubs and very creative visits.*
- *very imaginative experiences and schemes of a very high standard as pupils transfer to the secondary school.*
- *The way in which the school responds to the requirements of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework is a very strong feature.*
- *regular opportunities for pupils to develop skills and use them at the appropriate level of challenge in their work across the curriculum, especially in terms of developing literacy.*
- *very effective interventions, and additional support for pupils who have weak literacy and numeracy skills,*
- *valuable experiences that extend more able and talented pupils.*
- *specific activities that increase pupils' awareness of Welsh identity and promote the importance of the Welsh language for them as citizens of Wales very creatively.*
- *The school is pioneering in its provision for sustainable development and global citizenship.*

ESTYN 2016

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix 3 : The National Curriculum in Cwm Rhymni

### **Curriculum transition plan<sup>3</sup>**

*The school has especially good links with partner primary schools, which ensure curricular progression in addition to supporting pupils' wellbeing during transition.*

*The school provides very imaginative experiences as pupils transfer to the secondary school. There are schemes of a very high standard, such as 'Cau'r Bwlch' (Closing the Gap) to tailor provision for specific pupils; the innovative 'Multilingual School' scheme that develops pupils' wider literacy skills and the 'language ambassadors' scheme, which develops pupils' analytical skills and their awareness of the essentials of languages*

*ESTYN 2016*

### **Registration Classes**

The registration classes are defined by the school's houses. There are 4 houses, Cadog, Mabon, Samnan and Tudful. Pupils join a particular house in year 7 and are placed in a registration class defined by the house (e.g. Cadog 1 or Cadog 2) according to information received from the feeder school outlining academic ability and individual friendship groups. Pupils remain as members of the house whilst they are pupils at Cwm Rhymni.

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<sup>3</sup> Appendix 4: Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni's Cluster Collaboration Plan

## Principles of Banding and Setting

By banding and setting we are making decisions about the pupils' attainment and place them in groups of similar ability. We do this in order that we may offer an effective education to the pupils.

- **Banding** is where we place pupils into groups of classes according to general academic ability.

Pupils are placed into one of four educational bands;

- ✚ **Cadog/Mabon:** Mixed ability teaching groups
- ✚ **Sannan/Tudful:** Mixed ability teaching groups
- ✚ **Sgiliau Sylfaenol:** Teaching groups consisting of children who would benefit from additional support as they develop their basic language and numeracy skills.
- ✚ **Cynnal:** Pupils who have specific educational needs

- **Setting** is where we place pupils into a specific teaching class according to their academic ability in a specific core subject.

At Key Stage Three (KS3) we set pupils in specific streams according to their ability in Literacy or Numeracy. Some pupils can be in a different class for STEM based lessons and Literacy based lessons. This enables us to target and develop literacy and numeracy abilities of specific groups at the most appropriate level and speed for the individual pupils, it also ensures that the teachers can standardise and moderate the pupils' progress effectively. Teachers of specific STEM or literacy groups meet on a regular basis to discuss the development of individual pupils.

50	T	STEM				T	Llyfrennedd					Ymarferol	
		Ma	Gw	Da	Tn		C	Sa	Bac	Hn	Ff	Ce/Cf/Dr	Yc
		6	6	2	4		8	6	4	2	4	4	4
50	A	STEM				A	Llyfrennedd					Ymarferol	
		Ma	Gw	Da	Tn		C	Sa	Bac	Hn	Ff	Ce/Cf/Dr	Yc
		6	6	2	4		8	6	4	2	4	4	4
50	D	STEM				D	Llyfrennedd					Ymarferol	
		Ma	Gw	Da	Tn		C	Sa	Bac	Hn	Ff	Ce/Cf/Dr	Yc
		6	6	2	4		8	6	4	2	4	4	4
50	O	STEM				O	Llyfrennedd					Ymarferol	
		Ma	Gw	Da	Tn		C	Sa	Bac	Hn	Ff	Ce/Cf/Dr	Yc
		6	6	2	4		8	6	4	2	4	4	4
50	N	STEM				N	Llyfrennedd					Ymarferol	
		Ma	Gw	Da	Tn		C	Sa	Bac	Hn	Ff	Ce/Cf/Dr	Yc
		6	6	2	4		8	6	4	2	4	4	4
50	C	STEM				C	Llyfrennedd					Ymarferol	
		Ma	Gw	Da	Tn		C	Sa	Bac	Hn	Ff	Ce/Cf/Dr	Yc
		6	6	2	4		8	6	4	2	4	4	4
50	W	STEM				W	Llyfrennedd					Ymarferol	
		Ma	Gw	Da	Tn		C	Sa	Bac	Hn	Ff	Ce/Cf/Dr	Yc
		6	6	2	4		8	6	4	2	4	4	4
50	M	STEM				M	Llyfrennedd					Ymarferol	
		Ma	Gw	Da	Tn		C	Sa	Bac	Hn	Ff	Ce/Cf/Dr	Yc
		6	6	2	4		8	6	4	2	4	4	4
50	S	STEM				S	Llyfrennedd					Ymarferol	
		Ma	Gw	Da	Tn		C	Sa	Ff			Ce/Cf/Dr	Yc
		6	6	2	4		10	10	4			4	4
50	E	STEM				E	Llyfrennedd					Ymarferol	
		Ma	Gw	Da	Tn		C	Sa	Ff			Ce/Cf/Dr	Yc
		6	6	2	4		10	10	4			4	4
50	R	STEM				R	Llyfrennedd					Ymarferol	
		Ma	Gw	Da	Tn		C	Sa	Ff			Ce/Cf/Dr	Yc
		6	6	2	4		10	10	4			4	4



## **Basic Skills Strategy**

The main aim of the school's basic skills strategy is to promote and develop the pupils' literacy skills. We do this by offering a wider curriculum made up of activities encompassing the History, Geography and Religious Studies Curricula and concentrating on refining their language skills. A variety of assessment tasks are carried out to ensure that the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met. We have no doubt that the course strengthens the pupils' oral and written communication skills. The pupils become aware of the importance of specific features of language like punctuation and paragraphs, not only in regards to Welsh and English, but also in respect of other individual subjects. The pupils recognise that every subject requires the same level of language skills.

We have developed Basic Skills groups across Key Stage Three. We call these groups "SER".

The basic skills groups receive 20 basic skills language lessons (Welsh (10) and English (10)). The basic skills classes do not receive formal lessons in the noncore humanities (Religious Studies, History and Geography).

Science and Mathematics also participate in the basic skills strategy at Key Stage Three.

The "HWB" groups (7L1 and 8/9L1) also follow a modified and personalised curriculum based on the basic skills strategy and Entry Level Pathways courses therefore the pupils receive the basic skills curriculum in language and numeracy. There is an emphasis on delivering differentiated lessons through a multi-sensory approach and development of key life skills.







## **Pupil Support – "HWB" (Incorporating Additional Learning Needs)**

*Provision for pupils who have additional learning needs is very effective and enables these pupils to make good progress. Parents and pupils have a valuable input into the individual education plans. They include a great deal of useful information and strategies in order to meet pupils' learning needs.*

ESTYN 2016

The Additional Learning Needs department offer support to pupils over both school sites which include specific interventions, therapeutic support and nurture provisions. The 'Ganolfan' is based at the Gelli Haf site which is designated for children with Complex Learning Needs. The Hafan is a nurture provision with Challenging Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties which is also located on the Gelli Haf site. Both the Ganolfan and the Hafan have specifically resourced areas and rooms to meet the needs of our pupils. We've also developed our own Specific Learning Difficulty strategy to include staff that supports pupils across both sites who meet this criteria.

The school receives additional funding to meet identified additional learning needs. The additional funding enables us to provide 15 learning support assistants. Their role includes:

-  supporting students in the classroom
-  providing extra-curricular support
-  working with small groups and individuals
-  preparing resources
-  monitoring, reviewing and evaluating progress
-  running therapeutic interventions

We also have access to educational psychology assessments and support; behaviour support and an advisory teacher as well as other services. We also maintain and develop a wide range of resources. Buildings are accessible for young people with disabilities and we seek to improve our facilities at every opportunity.

We meet the additional needs of students with statements of additional learning needs in class and in extra-curricular

activities; these students also receive regular monitoring, review and support with targets set for improvement. Other students who have identified additional needs, are monitored regularly and receive support as appropriate. We are proactive in developing our ALN practice to meet the needs of the new ALN Bill that will be taking effect from September 2021. We make our practices Person Centred and use Person Centred Planning Meetings to help our pupils formulate their Individual Development Plans and 1 Page Profiles.

Our aim is to provide the necessary education and support so that all pupils have the ability to succeed independently and make a valuable contribution to both our school and the communities in which they live.

The Key Stage 3 Basic Skills work, linking with the overall Key Stage 3 strategy has focused on a wide range of developments. These include additional literacy and/or numeracy work for Year 7, 8, and 9 students. We provide enhanced pastoral and therapeutic interventions for learners who need this in an attempt to support their ability to learn.

Key Stage 4 pupils have followed a variety of vocational courses, enabling them to participate within the national framework of qualifications. Pupils in Year 11 gained worthwhile experience on work placements. We maintain close links with Careers Wales and with post-16 education providers. Several of our pupils attended a Link course at Ystrad Mynach College, thus having the opportunity to experience college life.

Again this year all of our discrete class pupils have participated in an end of year performance which include drama performances, displaying and reading aloud some of their English and Welsh work as well as receiving awards for their commitments to the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award.

We have continued to provide purposeful professional learning opportunities to several members of the non-teaching staff. This has improved our provision and positively impacted on pupils' wellbeing and attainment.

### **Hafan**

*Pupils who have emotional and behavioural needs receive high quality support. The 'HAFAN' (the school's specialist provision) and individual timetables for a very few pupils in Key Stage 3 contribute to developing their social skills and self-confidence effectively. As a result, many pupils who receive this provision improve their attitudes to learning and gain valuable qualifications. The 'Centre' provides beneficial specialist support for pupils who have complex additional needs.*

ESTYN 2016

The Hafan has been set up to help the pupils with complex needs. The purpose of the Hafan is to offer a differentiated and more suitable curriculum to those pupils who cannot access the main curriculum, and to provide them with a safe and happy place to learn. The main aims of the Hafan are to develop the pupils' independent skills, social skills, and to improve the pupils' self-esteem. The Hafan is a quiet room, with the emphasis being on rewarding pupils for their achievements.

### **Y Ganolfan**

The Ganolfan is where our pupils who've been identified as having complex learning difficulties, which often includes an Autistic Spectrum Condition, receive specialist support. The room is specially resourced to meet these needs encompassing the 'Autistic Friendly' approach. Staff hold frequent SULP and Talkabout sessions (Social Use of Language Programmes) as well as offering targeted support for individuals who require it as part of their individual development plan. The Ganolfan has been established for over 5 years and has proved extremely successful at supporting the needs of our pupils within a mainstream school.

## **THE GOVERNING BODY**

**Parent governors:** Ms. Nicola Acreman, Ms. Alyson Godfrey, Mr David Murray, Mr Ian Watkins and Mrs Marjorie Thomas.

**Community Governors:** Mr Kevin Viney, Mrs Jayne Jones, Mrs Anne Jones, Mr Anthony Martin, Mrs Christine Chater

**Teacher Governors:** Mrs Ceri Griffiths, Ms. Lisa Williams

**Support Governor:** Mrs Sian Walsh

**Clerk to the Governing Body:** Mrs Glenda Genner

**LEA Governors:** Councillor Phil Bevan, Councillor Colin Mann, Mr. Richard Parsons, Mrs. Liz Owen

**Headteacher Governor:** Mr. Owain ap Dafydd

The present Chair of Governors is Councillor Phil Bevan 75 Pontygwindy Road, Caerphilly

The present Vice Chair of Governors is Mrs Anne Jones

### **School Toilet Provision**

There should be 1 toilet for every 20 pupils in the school

	Number of toilets	
	Gwyndy	Gellihaf
Male	32	39
Female	30	34
Disabled	12	3
Total	74	76

The cleaning of the toilets is undertaken by MITIE. The toilets are regularly inspected and cleaned several times during the day.

## **The School Finance Committee**

The members of the Finance Committee are: Mr. Kevin Viney (Chairman), Mr Owain ap Dafydd (Head teacher), Councillor Phil Bevan, Councillor Colin Mann, Mrs Marjorie Thomas and Mr. Anthony Martin. The committee accepts advice from Mrs Rhys Thomas (Deputy Head Teacher) and Mr Steffan Phillips (School Bursar).

As in previous years, the committee has kept a close eye on the school's finances. This has been an exceptional year due to the national cuts in funding. There will be significant pressure placed on school budgets in the years to come and we will have to develop a clear strategy to overcome the inevitable cuts.

Approximately 10% of the school's funding is kept by the Local Authority and it is transferred to the PFI consortium under the heading 'Unitary Charge'. In practice this means that there are greater restrictions on the school's true budget than there are under the public system. As a result the Headteacher must carefully plan future spending. This has been successfully managed in collaboration between the Headteacher and the bursar. Here are the key themes of this year's spending plan.

The total of the finance delegated to us for the 2019-2020 financial year was £8,222,797 - £644,155 (the Unitary Charge). In light of these figures it was possible for us to shoulder comparative smooth transition from the old financial supervision to the new one.

In 2018-2019 we had a very challenging year financially. In the original funding we estimated a surplus of £15,730. At the end of the 18-19 financial we suffered a deficit of £107,241. This was largely due to the fall in income, particularly from the EAS and a reduction in Sixth Form funding. There was also a significant increase in the cost of employing teachers.

For 2019-20 we set an expected deficit budget of £167,279. The Local Authority guidelines have changed slightly recently, where a deficit budget can be set, provided it is less than 3% of the formula, which is £198,854 for 2019-20.

There will be another significant reduction in the Sixth Form grant this year. In the financial year 2018/19 we received £1,042,631 but this year we received £ 969,986 which is a reduction of £72,645. In addition to this in September 2019 there will be a 1.5% pay increase on the salaries of the management team, 2% for the support staff and a 3.5% increase for the main scale teachers.

Generally, the financial position is further compounded by teachers' increasing salaries. This is how things should be; but these expenses will not be financially viable and this makes each school's circumstances difficult, and in some cases, dangerously unstable. Our school, however, has managed to overcome this particular storm, and this is because of good financial planning. Our commitment, certainly, continues to stay firm to the principle of ensuring the teacher-pupil ratio as best as possible.

In September 2018 there was a 2% increase in teachers and ancillary staff salary and teachers in their first six years of teaching received an increase of 3.5%.

This adds additional pressure on the school finances and this pressure is expected to continue into the future. The school will have to plan carefully and implement effective strategies to overcome the challenges facing us.

The Gwyndy site was opened in September 2013. The site is located in Caerphilly and pupils from the Caerphilly basin area attend this school. The site has created a financial challenge as we have two different finances through the county's formula. Indeed, it has put extra pressure on the school's finance as we need more staff to run both sites and, therefore, some teachers need to travel between both sites.




## **Appendix 1: Categorisation**

The schools category for 2019 was published in January 2020

There are three elements to School Categorisation.

### **Step 1**

The Challenge Advisor visits the school to discuss with the Head and Leadership team concentrating on the following;

-  Standards
-  Teaching and learning
-  Leadership

### **Step 2**

The Challenge Advisor comes to a decision regarding the School's category by considering the Standards Category and also the Leadership grade and comparing these with specific standards.

The categorisation for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni for both steps have now been agreed with the Director of Education.

<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 2</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Amber</b>

## Appendix 2: External examination results

### AS Results

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
A	15.08%	17.65%	18.63%	12.93%	20.36%	15.79%	15.59%	8.98%	7.41%	12.30%
B	17.59%	19.46%	25.48%	16.38%	22.19%	19.74%	20.91%	11.84%	19.75%	15.98%
C	23.62%	23.08%	20.91%	26.29%	22.19%	23.25%	22.43%	21.63%	25.51%	24.18%
	56.28%	60.18%	65.02%	55.60%	64.74%	58.77%	58.94%	42.45%	52.67%	52.46%
D	20.10%	12.67%	14.07%	18.53%	18.54%	20.61%	20.53%	20.00%	17.70%	18.44%
E	15.58%	12.67%	9.51%	13.36%	7.90%	11.84%	9.13%	21.22%	13.58%	16.39%
	91.96%	85.52%	88.59%	87.50%	91.19%	91.23%	88.59%	83.67%	83.95%	87.30%
U	8.04%	10.86%	11.41%	12.50%	8.81%	8.77%	9.51%	15.10%	14.81%	12.70%

A Level Results	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
	210	284	240	232	159	183	146	181	184	217
A*-A	33%	29.58%	20.42%	23.28%	18.24%	19.67%	16.44%	9.39%	17.93%	19.35%
A*-B	69%	59.86%	45.83%	53.88%	42.14%	54.10%	35.62%	34.25%	45.65%	46.54%
A*-C	90%	83.80%	79.17%	80.17%	74.84%	83.61%	64.38%	60.22%	75.54%	70.05%
A*-E	99.61	100%	99.58%	99.57%	98.11%	98.91%	98.63%	95.58%	97.28%	96.31%

	2018	A Level	BTEC	A Level+Bac	A Level+Bac +BTEC
		140	46	210	256
A*-A		22%	96%	33%	44%
A*-B		65%	100%	69%	75%
A*-C		87%	100%	90%	91%
A*-E		99.29%	100.00%	99.52%	99.61%
A*-U		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

BTEC	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
	46	91	79	91	81	86	49	47	38
D*-D	96%	79%	78.48%	72.53%	65.43%	59.09%	59.18%	44.68%	44.74%
D*-M	100%	93%	96.20%	83.52%	88.89%	82.95%	87.76%	59.57%	78.95%
D*-P	100%	99%	100.00%	97.80%	100.00%	98.86%	100.00%	89.36%	92.11%

	Column A	Column B		Column A	Column B		Column A	Column B
School 2018/19	93	810						
School 2017/18	99	793	LEA 2017/18	97	699	Wales 2017/18	98	739
School 2016/17	100	784	LEA 2016/17	97	722	Wales 2016/17	97	733
School 2015/16	98	874	LEA 2015/16	96	849	Wales 2015/16	99	890
School 2014/15	100	823	LEA 2014/15	98	777	Wales 2014/15	97	800
School 2013/14	98	841	LEA 2013/14	97	784	Wales 2013/14	97	804
School 2012/13	99	834	LEA 2012/13	96	756	Wales 2012/13	96	807
School 2011/12	96	822	LEA 2011/12	96	724	Wales 2011/12	97	773

**Column A:** Percentage of 17 year olds registered for a volume of learning equivalent to 2 A levels and gaining the level 3 threshold  
**Column B:** Average points score for every pupils over 17 years old

## Key Stage Four Results (KS4)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Welsh</b>	68	60	73	73	77	66	71	56	60	65	74	75.6
<b>English</b>	68	59	68	68	50	73	75	62	63	71	59	71.6
<b>Mathematics or Numeracy</b>	57	51	57	63	65	68	74	59	71	52	57	70.2
<b>Science</b>	57	51	57	63	65	68	74	59	71	57	59	72
<b>Welsh or English</b>	63	61	84	88	92	85	85	84	67	74	64	64
<b>Welsh, English or Mathematics</b>	77	64	76	78	78	77	78	68	73	73	75	77.8
<b>Level 2 Threshold +</b>	78	67	79	79	81	84	83	73	80	75	79	80
<b>Level 2 Threshold</b>	53	45	54	61	62	61	68	53	62	52	52	64.9
<b>Level 1 Threshold</b>	67	68	81	88	84	93	90	88	71	58	62	70.2
<b>Trothwy Lefel 1</b>	89	93	95	95	96	98	97	99	99	98	93	96.4

### Pupils that receive Free School Meals

There is a significant gap between the achievement of pupils who receive Free School Meals and those who do not in Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymini.

On average pupils who receive Free School Meals at Cwm Rhymini achieve higher grades than those who also receive Free School Meals across the authority and Wales in the key indicators.

### **Appendix 3 : The National Curriculum in Cwm Rhymni**

*The school provides a very effective curriculum that meets statutory requirements for all pupils. In key stage 4 and in the sixth form, the school provides a wide range of options, which include a range of vocational and general courses, and meet the wishes of pupils and the needs of local employers very well.*

*The school provides an especially good choice of extra-curricular activities for pupils, which includes specific interest clubs and very creative visits, for example a visit to a Chinese restaurant with a teacher from China to expand their cultural understanding.*

*There are excellent links with the partner primary schools. The school provides very imaginative experiences as pupils transfer to the secondary school. There are schemes of a very high standard, such as 'Cau'r Bwlch' (Closing the Gap) to tailor provision for specific pupils, and the innovative 'Multilingual School' scheme that develops pupils' wider literacy skills.*

***The way in which the school responds to the requirements of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework is a very strong feature.*** Through detailed planning and developing purposeful resources, there are regular opportunities for pupils to develop skills and use them at the appropriate level of challenge in their work across the curriculum, especially in terms of developing literacy. Through very effective interventions, the school provides additional support for pupils who have weak literacy and numeracy skills, as well as providing valuable experiences that extend more able and talented pupils.

*Provision for the Welsh dimension and the Welsh language is an especially strong element. The school arranges specific activities that increase pupils' awareness of Welsh identity and promote the importance of the Welsh language for them as citizens of Wales very creatively. The 'Siartr Camau Cymreictod' (Steps to Welshness Charter) sets out expectations about the correct use of the Welsh language at the school in a positive learning environment. Pupils are rewarded very effectively through the code system, the '3Cs'; Cymreictod, Cwrteisi a Chyfeillgarwch (Welshness, Courtesy and Friendship).*

*The school is innovative in its provision for sustainable development and global citizenship. For example, Mandarin is offered as an additional language and the school works very effectively with schools in Brazil to enrich cross-curricular learning experiences. The school council is extremely active and creates a school that aims to act sustainably. The school works especially well with the wider community through specific activities locally, nationally and internationally.*

ESTYN 2016

The National Curriculum in Wales is a Government framework that sets out what must be taught to children in school, and at what age. It is designed to provide a good grounding in language, mathematics and science and is divided into separate Key Stages for secondary school pupils:

- Key Stage 3: ages 11 - 14
- Key Stage 4: ages 14 - 16.

#### **Key Stage Four**

Children at the age range of 14-16 will follow the Key Stage Four (KS4) curriculum.

The KS4 Curriculum outlines the subjects that every child is expected to study including what range of subjects must be available for pupils to choose to study. Key Stage Four (KS4) is the first opportunity



for pupils to choose subjects they wish to study. This is the beginning of the child's **14-19 Learning Pathway**.

The curriculum at KS4 is divided into three distinct groups of subjects;

- Core Subjects
- Statutory Subjects
- Optional Subjects

### **Core Subjects**

The core subjects are those subjects that every pupil has to study between the ages of 11-16. The core curriculum covers approximately 70% of a child's lessons. Core Subjects in National Curriculum at Key stage Four (KS4) are English, Welsh, mathematics and science. Every pupil is not only expected to follow a curriculum in the core subjects they are also expected to achieve a recognised qualification in each core subject at the end of KS4.

In Cwm Rhymni we consider the Welsh Baccalaureate to be a core subject. Every pupil follows the Baccalaureate and is expected to achieve a qualification in the Baccalaureate at the end of KS4.

### **KS4 Science**

Pupils in the set 1 and 2 classes in year 10 are generally expected to follow the triple science course, whereby they will study chemistry, physics and biology separately. These pupils have already started studying work from this course and by the end of year 11 they will have had the opportunity to earn three separate GCSE grades in the subject. Pupils in set 3 have also started by studying the same work, and dependant on their progress in the subject over the next few months, there is the possibility of following the triple science course.

All other pupils have started studying the chemistry, physics and biology 1 modules, with the intention of sitting examinations in each of these during the summer of year 10. During year 11, these pupils will be expected to follow the Additional Applied Science (GCSE) course which will also provide them with the opportunity of attaining two separate GCSE's in the subject.

There is a growing national emphasis on the core subjects.

**Children's academic success is measured in their ability to achieve the Welsh Baccalaureate and good grades in the core subjects at the end of KS4.**

### **The Welsh Baccalaureate**

As at Key Stage 3, all of our pupils are required to follow the Welsh BAC at Key Stage 4. They will either follow the Welsh BAC National, or the Welsh BAC Foundation. There is no examination at the end of the Welsh BAC course.

Our year 10 pupils in September will be following the new look Welsh BAC. They will work their way through a series of challenges focussing on:

- Enterprise
- Education and the world of work
- Global Citizenship

As they complete each challenge, they will develop their wider, employability skills which will be monitored and assessed. Each pupil will also be required to complete an Individual Investigation, which is an extended research project on an area of personal interest. Pupils will have to pass their Welsh or English and Maths GCSE's, along with another 3 GCSE's/BTEC's to be awarded the qualification.

The Welsh BAC National will be the equivalent of 1 GCSE.

**Employers expect that good candidates for employment have achieved good grades in the core subjects.**

### **Statutory Subjects**

Children must also experience the statutory subjects which include physical education, religious education, and some education in personal and social skills, sex education, work-related learning and careers advice. It is not compulsory for students to achieve a recognised qualification in these statutory subjects.

### **Optional Subjects**

These are the subjects that children can choose to study at KS4. The optional subjects are non-core subjects that will not only be taught at KS4 but will normally be offered for post 16 study.

Art and Design	Drama	Information Technology
Art and Design (Textiles)	French	Music
Business	Geography	Physical Education
Construction	Health and Social Care	Religious Studies
D&T Graphics	History	Spanish
D&T Product Design	Hospitality	Travel

The optional subjects count for approximately 24% of a child's lessons.

## **14-19 Learning Pathways**

The 14-19 Learning Pathway of a child is the start of the journey they decide to take towards a future career. The school has an obligation to ensure that there is a clear 14-19 curriculum pathway for every child.

The school has to offer suitable 14-19 Learning Pathways to the children in order that they can make informed choices according to their individual needs, expectations and ambition. We must ensure that an individual child's pathway offers a suitable range of future career pathways.

**The core subjects are key elements of every child's learning pathway.** Success in the core subjects at KS4 offer a foundation for most career pathways and further post 16 studies of the core subjects offer an academic pathway suitable for a wide range of career development.

The 14-19 Learning Pathway leads into lifelong learning. Some pupils will leave school at 16 and continue with their education in college, employment or training. The majority of our pupils remain in school to continue their Welsh medium education at post 16. It is advisable for children who are considering their options in year 9 to consider what their long term ambitions or desires are.

Most children will not have a clearly defined pathway mapped out at the age of 14, however they may have a general ambition (e.g. a desire to go to university). Children should consider their future ambitions for academic study when choosing their subjects for KS4.

Certain universities consider attainment at KS4 as well as attainment at post 16. They may well expect candidates to have chosen subjects at KS4 which are more likely to set an academic foundation for future studies (i.e. Core subjects and Academic GCSE's). However, most universities encourage a breadth of study and welcome a wide range of subjects including core, academic, practical and vocational.

## Appendix 4: Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni's Cluster Collaboration Plan

11 primary schools contribute to the collaboration within Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni's cluster of schools.

- Ysgol Gymraeg Caerffili
- Ysgol Gymraeg Penalltau
- Ysgol Gymraeg y Lawnt
- Ysgol Gymraeg y Castell
- Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon
- Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Sannan
- Ysgol Gymraeg Ifor Bach
- Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Derwen
- Ysgol Gymraeg Gilfach
- Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Allta
- Ysgol Gymraeg Trelyn

The collaboration between the schools is a significant strength which contributes to the success and very high standards achieved by these schools. The Cwm Rhymni cluster is acknowledged as a highly successful pioneering partnership where a good practice is consistently shared on each level across the cluster.

The collaboration aims to ensure that each pupil who attends a Welsh medium school within the Caerphilly Council Authority receives educational opportunities which will enable them to reach their potential.

### **THE PUPILS' PROGRESS IS THE HEART OF EVERYTHING**

Because of this collaboration it is possible to offer a variety of opportunities and activities in the primary school or in Cwm Rhymni to promote the development of individual or groups of pupils.

#### **Cwm Rhymni's Transition Plan**

We aim to ensure that each pupil who starts in Cwm Rhymni is keen to further develop and build upon the progress previously made during their period at the primary school. Cwm Rhymni and the primary schools work together closely by sharing information and **developing plans in order to ensure that the pupils' initial period in Cwm Rhymni is a happy and successful one.**

#### **Joint mentoring Plan**

We operate a mentoring plan across all of the Cwm Rhymni cluster primary schools.

Each school has different plans for supporting and guiding pupils who need additional or different forms of assistance in order to develop their abilities, specifically in literacy and numeracy. Individual pupils' intervention plans vary according to the school and pupils' needs and they have proved to be effective over a period of time.

We aim to ensure that we co-operate effectively across the cluster so that we are aware of the good practice and are able to share ideas in order to ensure our pupils' progress.

The Cwm Rhymni teachers will visit each primary school regularly to discuss intervention plans and to discuss individual pupils and groups of pupils in year 5 and 6. By providing an effective mentoring system across the cluster, individual pupils and groups of pupils will benefit from planned activities across the cluster in order to develop according to their talent, ability or personal needs.

**All pupils in Year 6 will have the opportunity to participate in Activities days:**

### **Extended Activities Days**

In each primary school, there will be individuals who benefit from taking part in extended activities. Maybe these individuals have special abilities or a strong awareness and understanding in specific fields.

These pupils will benefit by co-operating with a group of pupils of similar interests and abilities on extended activities provided for them within the primary school.

We will plan a series of days to be held at Cwm Rhymni which will give the year 6 pupils an opportunity to develop their understanding or extended ability in a field or specific fields .

### **Additional Activities Day**

In each primary school there are pupils who appear unable to take advantage of all the opportunities which are available within the school. There are a number of reasons which contribute towards this, but we must recognise if the pupils are not able to make use of the opportunities to develop early on in their school life or it will be very difficult to succeed in reaching their potential in the long term.

These pupils often benefit from the school plans to support and guide pupils who need additional assistance. The joint mentoring plan will reinforce this work and enable us to develop additional opportunities across the cluster in order to promote the ambition and confidence of our children.

We plan a series of days to be held in Cwm Rhymni which will provide pupils in year 5 and year 6 with an opportunity to develop their ambition and confidence whilst also enhancing understanding of topics that are not necessarily available in the primary school.

### **Special Activities Day**

Pupils who have not participated in Extended activities days or the Additional activities days will attend special activities days during the spring term. The children will enjoy similar activities to those experienced by their peers during the other activities days.

These days are designed to enhance the children's understanding of what they can expect when they start in Cwm Rhymni and to prepare them more effectively for this most important transition.

### **Science in year 6**

Cwm Rhymni's Science department collaborates with year 6 teachers to introduce a unit of science work in year 6. Cwm Rhymni teachers visit the primary schools to hold science lessons and year 6 pupils visit Cwm Rhymni to gain experience from performing experiments in a laboratory.

### **Chwil Chwarae Days**

Musical days are held in Cwm Rhymni where pupils who have a specific musical talent have the opportunity to meet with music teachers and other talented pupils and to perform in front of an audience.

## **Urdd competitions**

A variety of competitions are held across the cluster on the Cwm Rhymni site. Cwm Rhymni enables this to happen as this is an additional tool, in our agreed plan, for effective transition between the primary schools and Cwm Rhymni. The pupils will settle in quickly and smoothly if they are used to being on the school site.

## **Transition Day**

During the summer's second half term (June/July) in year 6 the pupils visit Cwm Rhymni for a day. The pupils receive a timetable for the day enabling them to experience activities as year 7 classes. The activities are planned so that the pupils have experiences they would not normally receive in the primary school but will be available for them in year 7 in Cwm Rhymni.

## **Transition Evenings**

Two evenings are held during a pupil's period in year 6.

During the Christmas term in year 6, parents are invited to both sites at Cwm Rhymni for an evening of introduction to the school and building and it is an opportunity for the parents to meet the school leaders. A central presentation is held in the school hall at the beginning of the evening where the school's organisation is explained. Following this there is a tour around the school under the guidance of a teacher and one of the school's senior leadership team. This is an opportunity for parents to get to know the site and ask about any matter of particular interest or worry to them.

At the end of the transition day during the second part of summer half term (June/July) a year 6 transition evening is held for the parents. Subject-based activities are held around the school so that the parents can get a taste of the kinds of subjects that the pupils study in year 7. There is also a chance to buy a school uniform.