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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**  
**Ysgol Gymraeg Garth Olwg**

**St Illtyd Road  
Church Village  
Pontypridd  
Rhondda Cynon Taff  
CF38 1RQ**

**Date of inspection: January 2011**

**by**

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



**INVESTORS | BUDDSODDWYR  
IN PEOPLE | MEWN POBL**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Context

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg is a designated Welsh-medium school located in a modern building in Church Village, about four miles from Pontypridd. The building shares a campus with Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg, Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre and a privately managed nursery. The school was built as part of the Private Finance Initiative scheme. The school serves an area that includes the surrounding community and neighbouring areas. The school states that, in general, the school's catchment area is comparatively prosperous.

The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is 6.3% which is substantially below the national percentage. The school has 12 classes, of which two are mixed age classes. One class is located in the secondary school building.

At the time of the inspection, there were 330 pupils aged 3-11 years on the school register, compared with 271 during the previous inspection in 2005. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and 54 other pupils are on the school's additional learning needs register.

Eight per cent of pupils come from homes in which Welsh is the main language. Welsh is used as the medium of teaching throughout the school, with English added as a subject in key stage 2, with the aim that pupils will be bilingual by the end of their period in the school.

Five members of staff have joined the school since the previous inspection, including the headteacher who has been in post since September 2010. At the time of the inspection, three teachers were absent either through illness or maternity leave.

The individual school budget for Ysgol Gymraeg Garth Olwg for 2010-2011 is £2,605 per pupil which compares with a maximum of £9,064 and a minimum of £2,553 for primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taff. The school has the 114th highest budget of the 116 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taff.

When reading the above school budget statement, it should be borne in mind that Ysgol Gymraeg Garth Olwg is financed as a Private Finance Initiative school.

## 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:

- almost all of the pupils make solid progress during their period in the school;
- a caring and diligent ethos exists that promotes respect, courtesy and a healthy attitude towards work, and in a Welsh atmosphere; and
- the provision for pupils with additional educational needs is comprehensive.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- leaders, managers and staff share the same vision which is linked with raising standards;
- planning development is a core element of the life and work of the school; and
- the headteacher, staff and governors work together well to develop activities and new ways of learning and teaching which have a positive influence on pupils' achievement.

## Recommendations

In order to continue to improve, the school needs to:

R1 ensure that there is a consistency in the provision for the most able pupils;

R2 continue to address raising the level of attendance;

R3 share good teaching practice throughout the school; and

R4 develop further the strategic leadership procedures that have been introduced recently.

### **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 children's foundation assessment results on entry to the school indicate that the basic skills of many of the children are limited. However, by the end of their period in the reception class, most of the children achieve the outcomes expected of them for their age.

During their period in the school, almost all of the pupils make solid progress in their learning. Pupils throughout the school make very good progress in their use of Welsh from the time they begin in the school. Most pupils use the language fluently and effectively during every type of formal and informal occasion. The manner in which the majority of children regularly use Welsh together is a strong feature. The majority can discuss various topics very effectively in Welsh throughout the school, and in English, in key stage 2, by using an extensive vocabulary. Their knowledge of vocabulary that is specific to the areas of learning is exceptionally good. Most pupils in key stage 1 read at a level that is appropriate to their age and ability and they make full use of their writing skills across the curriculum. In key stage 2, the majority are able to read meaningfully and with good expression in both languages and are able to write to a standard that is appropriate to their age and ability.

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) achieve well. However, according to the evidence seen of pupils' work, an analysis of the school's data and lesson observations, the most able pupils do not always achieve to their full ability. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls, although the data suggests that there is some difference in writing, with boys' performance being significantly below that of girls.

The statutory assessment results at the end of key stage 1 show an upward trend and that the percentage of pupils who attain the expected levels (level 2) is consistently higher than the average for the local authority and Wales. The school's attainment varies when compared with the family of similar schools. In Welsh and science, the school's results are consistently higher than those of the family of schools, the local authority and Wales. The results in mathematics are consistently higher than those for the local authority and Wales but below the averages for the family of schools over the past four years.

In Welsh, the percentage that attained a higher than expected level (level 3) over the past three years is above the averages for the local authority and Wales, but below average for the family of similar schools. For level 3 in mathematics and science, the results are uneven, sometimes above and sometimes below the average.

When comparing the results in key stage 1 with those of similar schools throughout Wales for pupils entitled to free school meals, the school's results for the expected levels (level 2) in Welsh over the past four years have varied between the highest 25% and slightly below the upper 50%. The mathematics results have been

consistently in the lower 50%, whilst the results for science have varied between the highest and lowest 25%. The core subject indicator (the expected performance in Welsh or English, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum) has varied between the upper and lower 50% over four years.

The trend in the statutory assessment results at the end of key stage 2 varies, but indicates that the proportion of pupils who regularly attain the expected levels (level 4) are consistently higher than the average for the local authority and Wales in every subject and in the core subject indicator. However, when compared with the family of similar schools, the school's attainment varies from subject to subject and from year to year.

In Welsh, the percentage of pupils who attained a higher than expected level (level 5) over the past three years is low when compared with the averages of the family of similar schools, the local authority and Wales. In English and mathematics, the percentage that attained the higher than expected level is sometimes above and sometimes below the averages of the family of similar schools, the local authority and Wales. In science, the percentage that attained the higher than expected level compares favourably with the local authority, varies when compared with the average for Wales but is consistently below that for the family of similar schools.

When comparing key stage 2 results with those of similar schools throughout Wales from the standpoint of entitlement to free school meals, the school's results for the expected level (level 4) have varied between the highest 25% and the lower 50% in the core subject indicator and for every subject except science, in which it has varied between the highest 25% and the lowest 25% over four years.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

The behaviour of most pupils is good both in lessons and in the school playground. The majority show motivation and pride in their work. They enjoy learning and take an active part in their own learning. Most pupils show respect to each other and, almost without exception, they are courteous when dealing with adults and visitors.

The majority of pupils feel safe in the school and they have a clear understanding of how they can become healthy. They are aware of the importance of healthy eating and physical exercise for their personal and educational development. The older pupils are conscientious when caring for younger children at different times each day.

The procedure for registration is correct and meets the statutory requirements. The attendance level for the school over the past three terms is 92.4%, which is higher than the local authority average, but when compared with similar schools in terms of free school meals, it is in the lowest 25% for 2009-2010. The pupils are aware of the importance of attendance and punctuality which they respect.

Through the effective work of the School Council, and the school's other procedures, various groups of pupils have regular opportunities to contribute to the life and development of the school. There are a number of activities which link the school with the wider community. For example, groups of Year 6 pupils participate in

conversation sessions with adults who are learning Welsh in the Lifelong Learning Centre.

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

The school provides an extensive range of rich learning experiences for pupils of all ages and ability. It provides, in particular, specific tasks that have been planned to close the gap between the standard of writing of boys and girls. The school's planning systems are effective and ensure that there are opportunities for all pupils to experience a good range of varied activities. Communication, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) have a prominent place within the planning.

The teachers prepare differentiated activities for pupils within the lessons that were observed. At its best, this is effective, but it does not always meet all the needs of the most able pupils. Key stage 2 teachers provide interesting opportunities for pupils to write extendedly in Welsh and English.

The provision for developing aspects of the history, geography, art and music of Wales is a strength in the school.

Education for sustainability and global citizenship shows aspects of excellence with the school having gained the International Schools Prize on two occasions. The teachers provide varied opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of the life of children in India and Africa through this approach. Through the work of the Eco Council, the school provides good opportunities in order to ensure that pupils are aware of the importance of saving energy and water.

### **Teaching: Good**

In general, teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan a range of interesting activities that stimulate the pupils. There is effective collaboration between teachers and the classroom assistants throughout the school.

In the best lessons, there is a suitable pace, interesting tasks and penetrating questioning. Almost without exception, the relationship between teachers and pupils is one that encourages respect and courtesy. On the whole, teachers' expectations are high and, usually, they build on pupils' previous experiences and challenge them. However, the provision for the most able pupils is inconsistent.

In every class there is a supportive ethos and a diligent atmosphere in which everyone is respected. Good examples are seen of detailed marking and constructive responses to pupils' work which helps them to understand how to develop their written work. However, this practice is not consistent across all classes. Teachers enable pupils to identify targets for improvement and record them in various ways.



The school has effective assessment systems that summarise pupils' progress. Teachers make appropriate use of this system. A computerised tracking system is used effectively to monitor pupils' progress throughout the school, including able pupils and those who are likely to underachieve by the end of the key stage.

The assessment for learning strategies are given a prominent place in teachers' plans and effective use is made of them in the best lessons. The learning aims and success criteria are shared with pupils in the majority of lessons.

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

There are effective arrangements in place to support pupils' health and wellbeing. Pupils are encouraged to express opinions and to contribute effectively to developments within the school, and to be associated with activities within the local community. Appropriate provision is made for pupils' spiritual development in collective worship sessions. The school promotes the moral and social development of all its pupils daily by nurturing values such as fairness and respect in every activity. The learning experiences promote pupils' personal development well. The opportunity to empathise with other cultures in order to understand the differences between people from various parts of the world is very effective.

Effective use is made of specialist services in order to broaden the provision for pupils, for example the police in order to understand how to stay safe, the fire service in order to understand the dangers of fire and the nurse in order to understand matters relating to physical changes in the body.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding. These are known to all members of staff and pupils know to whom to turn to in an emergency.

Support for children with additional learning needs is one of the school's strengths. There is effective provision in the school for pupils who require support and they are identified at a very early stage. The language support teacher ensures that members of staff are aware of the needs of every child on the register, that they understand them and provide effective work programmes for them. The additional learning needs co-ordinator assesses the progress of these pupils regularly and considers whether or not the pupils have met the targets that are in their individual education plans.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school has a welcoming ethos that provides a safe, stimulating and supportive environment for every pupil. Every pupil has access to every aspect of the life of the school and everyone is encouraged to participate fully in all elements of the life of the school, irrespective of their background or needs. The awareness of the majority of pupils of beliefs and cultures has been developed purposefully and they are very tolerant of each other. There is a wide range of activities that foster pupils' understanding of the wider world. The school deals effectively with cases of challenging behaviour.

The school has sufficient high-quality resources to meet the needs of the curriculum and efficient and purposeful use is made of them. The classrooms and corridors are colourful and stimulating, and celebrate pupils' efforts successfully.

The buildings meet pupils' requirements effectively. The purposeful use of the outside areas including the allotment and the nearby woods enrich pupils' experiences. As a result of the increase in the number of pupils, the current building is not large enough. However, effective arrangements are made to place Year 6 pupils in an empty classroom in the secondary school that is on the same campus.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

The school has clear aims and objectives and managers and leaders convey their vision and values successfully. The headteacher and the senior management team give purposeful strategic direction to the life and work of the school. The headteacher, staff and governors work together well to develop activities and new methods of learning and teaching that have a positive influence on pupils' achievements.

The school has a wide range of management and curricular policies which are implemented effectively. All members of staff have clear responsibilities and job descriptions which are performed well. The staff's continuous professional development is supported through an effective system of performance management that sets relevant targets for improving individuals within the context of the school. The curriculum co-ordinators provide clear guidance about their areas in regular staff meetings and they contribute effectively to the self-evaluation process.

The governing body has an appropriate awareness of the school's performance. It provides successful support in strategic planning and undertakes its duties conscientiously. The governing body, jointly with the headteacher, has established effective arrangements recently to further support the school in monitoring, setting targets and generally developing the school. There has not been sufficient time yet to be able to measure the real effect of every element of this process.

The school succeeds in giving due consideration to national and local priorities. The Foundation Phase and a number of assessment for learning strategies are implemented conscientiously. The school has won the International Schools Prize twice for its work in the field of Global Citizenship. During 2010, the school gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the BECTA award, the Green Flag, Fair Trade school and Healthy School status.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The self-evaluation report is of good quality and, in general, clearly identifies the majority of areas for development within the school. The school's self-evaluation timetable was modified recently and now the procedure operates on a two-year cycle. It is ensured that every member of staff is part of this process. Questionnaires are sent to parents, pupils and governors and the Moodle system is used to receive

responses. The outcomes of the self-evaluation process influence the priorities in the school development plan appropriately. The process also includes lesson observations, questioning learners and examining pupils' work.

A school development plan is produced, which is of good quality, and based on an evaluation of the previous plan and the priorities that emerged within the self-evaluation process. The priorities have been costed appropriately, the responsible person has been designated, and the implementation period has been noted, together with the success criteria.

The school has responded fully to the recommendations contained in the previous inspection report.

The teachers are included in networks of professional practice within the institution and, on a broader level, in networks with other schools. Internally, the school holds meetings to discuss and share the latest practices in the fields of learning and teaching. On a broader level, there is close collaboration with the local cluster of schools on a number of joint projects, in particular the transition activities with the local secondary school. These partnerships have a positive influence on planning and on developing the latest practices in teaching effectively. The school has an appropriate system of performance management that provides opportunities for continuous professional development.

The school has created initial contacts with one school within the family of schools in relation to improving the quality of boys' writing.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has strong links with a range of different partners. The school takes advantage of the links with the local Lifelong Learning Centre and the secondary school that are on the same campus, as the pupils use their resources occasionally, for example the theatre, library and the science laboratory.

The school has a strong Parent Teacher Association that is very supportive of all the activities that are provided. The school's new website has strengthened the links with parents and the community. A group of parents comes to the school regularly to provide a service to listen to pupils reading and, in particular, to help with a range of educational visits.

The links between the school and the local community are good. Visits are arranged to local workplaces. The school has close links with Salem chapel, Ton-teg. Concerts are held there and the minister is a regular visitor to the school. Members of the community also come to the school to talk to the pupils. This makes a positive contribution to enriching pupils' experiences.

A variety of other visitors from the local and wider community make a good contribution to enriching pupils' learning experiences. The school receives support and advice from the county's specialist agencies, such as educational psychologists and language and speech therapists, in order to meet the additional needs of a specific cohort of pupils.

The school has relevant new plans in place to strengthen further the partnership with the local nurseries that feed it. It also has very effective transition arrangements for pupils who transfer to the secondary school. These arrangements are an appropriate support to help pupils settle quickly in their new environment.

The school works effectively in partnership with a number of institutions such as other schools in the cluster, Ysgol Gilwern and Maes yr Haf, the Education and Business Partnership and local employers. It also has close links with colleges for initial teacher training.

The school makes better use of the funding that is available to it through pooling funding with the cluster of schools to provide joint in-service training. It also shares resources with the secondary school and the Lifelong Learning Centre, such as the gymnasium, the astroturf pitch and the theatre.

Effective arrangements are in place for standardising and moderating pupils' work on a secondary school catchment level.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school's staffing and financial resources are managed and used effectively to improve the learning. There are sufficient experienced teaching and support staff to deal with all aspects of the work of the school. The teachers and the support staff work effectively together to ensure appropriate support for pupils and to create a stimulating learning environment.

The teachers make effective use of their given time for planning, preparation and assessment and this has had a positive effect on the standard of the planning. Staff specialisms are used to support within areas of the curriculum and to provide appropriate internal training. This training is based on outcomes from the performance management system in order to have a positive influence on raising standards, for example raising the standards of boys' writing throughout the school.

There are sufficient resources of good quality to meet pupils' needs and the school's building and grounds are used to their full potential.

The budget is used effectively to respond to the priorities set within the school development plan and full use is made of the funding that is available, with only reasonable amounts held in reserve year on year.

When considering learners' good progress and outcomes, and the appropriate use of funding, the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

Almost every pupil said that they feel safe in the school, that they do well there, that the teachers and other adults help them to learn, and that they know what to do and to whom to turn if they think that the work is difficult.

Most know whom to turn to if they are concerned or worried, that there are many opportunities in the school to have regular physical exercise and there are sufficient resources available for them to do their work.

Many of them believe that the school deals well with any bullying and that the homework which is set helps them to understand their work in the school.

The majority of pupils are of the opinion that other children behave well in lessons so that they are able to do their work and that almost everyone behaves well during playtimes and lunch time.

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Sixty-six parent questionnaires were returned.

Almost all parents are satisfied with the school in general; they stated that their children enjoy the school, that they feel safe there and that they had support to settle in well when they began at the school. Almost all parents were also of the opinion that pupils' behaviour was good, that their children are making good progress in the school, that the teaching is good and that staff have high expectations of the pupils. They also believe that the pupils are encouraged to be healthy and to do physical exercise regularly.

Most parents believe that the school is well run, that staff treat every child fairly and with respect, that they receive regular information about their children's progress, and that the school helps their children to become more mature and to shoulder responsibilities. Most parents also believe that the school organises a good variety of activities, including trips and visits, and that they feel comfortable about asking questions in the school, making suggestions or identifying problems.

Many of the parents feel that the work that is set builds well on what their children learn in school, that they understand the school's complaints procedure, that their children are well prepared for moving on to the next school and that their children receive appropriate additional support in relation to any specific individual needs.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Huw Watkins	Reporting Inspector
Glyn Roberts	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Glenn Evans	Peer Inspector
Hefin Gruffydd	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

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## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

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