



ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS 2017-2018

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

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 1677¹ pupils but we expect this number to increase approaching 1800 by September 2019. It is expected that there will be over 2000 pupils at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni by 2021.

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 the 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 training 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. By 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.

¹ September 2018

School growth

The following table shows expected growth for the school:




	Gellihaf	Gwynndy	
2026	1357	906	2263
2025	1351	875	2225
2024	1343	861	2204
2023	1324	820	2144
2022	1302	785	2088
2021	1288	751	2038
2020	1226	702	1928
2019	1197	622	1819
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 School Development Plan

The school improvement plan arises directly from the self-evaluation report and enables the school to set definite priorities in order to raise standards, including detailed and challenging targets for most indicators. The plan refers appropriately to maintaining and raising pupils' standards of learning and wellbeing, providing a modern curriculum and rich experiences from a Welsh and Welsh language perspective and developing leadership at all levels.

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There are three dimensions to the plan;

-  Standards
-  Teaching
-  Ethos

The main focus from the plan is the standards of Teaching and Learning. The Departmental Development Plans are integrated into the School Development Plan. This framework enables all members of staff to achieve the aims and objectives of the school.

One of the main objectives of Ysgol Gyfun Cwmni Rhymni's School Development Plan 2017-2020 is to "provide a modern curriculum and rich experiences (from the perspective of the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension) to meet the needs of all pupils".

The National Curriculum in Cwm Rhymni²

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 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 innovative in its provision for sustainable development and global citizenship.*

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Curriculum transition plan³

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, and 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

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Registration Classes

The registration classes are defined by the school's houses. There are 4 houses, Cadog, Mabon, Sannan 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.

² Appendix 3 : The National Curriculum in Cwm Rhymni

³ 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 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 curriculum 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 the 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.

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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, 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 2020. 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 included 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 development 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.

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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 Alison Price, Mr David Murray, Mr Ian Watkins and Mrs Marjorie Thomas.

Community Governors: Mr Kevin Viney, Mr Richard Parsons, 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, Mrs Ruth Treherne, Miss Emma Saunders.

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 headline 'Unitary Charge'. In practice this means that there are greater restrictions on the schools 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 2018-2019 financial year was £7,741,031 - £644,155 (the Unitary Charge). In light of these figures it was possible for us to shoulder comparative smooth bridging from the old financial supervision to the new one.

We had a stable financial year in 2017-2018 and we managed to achieve a balanced budget. We originally estimated a surplus of £83,828. We managed to save a significant amount on staffing and through effective planning. We received asome additional finnance for specific projects.

We set an expected surplus of £15,730 for the 2018-19 financial year. It has been a significant challenge as we received a reduced sixth form grant. For 2017-18 we received £1,147,927 but for 2018-19 we received £1,036,225 a reduction of £111,702.

Generally, the financial order is further compounded by teachers' increasing salaries. This is how things should be; but these expenses will not be financially sufficient; 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 that 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 2018 was published in January 2019

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.

Step 1	Step 2
C	Amber

Appendix 2: External examination results

AS Results

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

A Level Results

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

A Level+Bac

	2018	A Level	BTEC	A Level+Bac	+BTEC
		190	91	284	375
A*-A		28%	79%	30%	42%
A*-B		55%	93%	60%	68%
A*-C		83%	99%	84%	87%
A*-E		100%	99%	100%	100%
A*-U		100%	100%	100%	100%

BTEC	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
	91	79	91	81	86	49	47	38
D*-D	79%	78.48%	72.53%	65.43%	59.09%	59.18%	44.68%	44.74%
D*-M	93%	96.20%	83.52%	88.89%	82.95%	87.76%	59.57%	78.95%
D*-P	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 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
Welsh	68	60	73	73	77	66	71	56	60	65	74
English	68	59	68	68	50	73	75	62	63	71	59
Mathematics or Numeracy	57	51	57	63	65	68	74	59	71	57	59
Science	63	61	84	88	92	85	85	84	67	74	64
Welsh or English	77	64	76	78	78	77	78	68	73	73	75
Welsh, English or Mathematics	78	67	79	79	81	84	83	73	80	75	79
Level 2 Threshold +	53	45	54	61	62	61	68	53	62	52	52
Level 2 Threshold	67	68	81	88	84	93	90	88	71	58	62
Level 1 Threshold	89	93	95	95	96	98	97	99	99	98	93

Number of pupils in Year 11 who were on roll in January 2017 : 204

Percentage of pupils in Year 11 who:

	entered at least one qualification	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	Average capped 9 (2) points score per pupil	Average capped 8 (2) wider points score per pupil	Average wider points score per pupil
School 2016/17	100	99	58	52	344	318	424
LA Area 2016/17	99	94	60	50	335	312	428
Wales 2016/17	99	94	67	55	350	325	456
School 15/16/17	66	..	..	..	..	223	483
School 14/15/16	34	..	..	..	..	120	536

Percentage of pupils in Year 11 who achieved an A*-C Grade in :

	English / Welsh	English	Welsh (2)	Science	Maths	Maths - Numeracy	Best of Maths
School 2017/18	76	59	74	64	57	49	59
School 2016/17	73	71	66	74	53	53	57
School 2015/16	71	63	62	65	72		
LA Area 2017/18	58	56	74	58	54	51	57
LA Area 2016/17	61	60	63	69	55	54	58
Wales 2017/18	65	63	74	63	59	58	64
Wales 2016/17	67	64	73	76	59	57	62
School 16/17/18	73	64	70	67			
School 15/16/17	70	65	61	79			
School 14/15/16	72	67	64	85			

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 Rhymni.

On average pupils who receive Free School Meals at Cwm Rhymni 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.

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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.