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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

**Glyn Derw High School
Penally Road
Ely
Cardiff
CF5 5XP**

Date of inspection: November 2011

by

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



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

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

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

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

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

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

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

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Context

Glyn Derw High School is situated on the western edge of Cardiff, serving the large housing estate of Caerau and part of Ely. There are 589 pupils on roll between the ages of 11 and 18, including 28 students in the sixth form. Pupil numbers have fallen considerably since the last inspection in 2005.

The school serves a Communities First area where there are economic and social disadvantages. Seventy-nine point five per cent of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is 38%. This figure is significantly higher than the national average of 17.4%.

The school caters for the full ability range. However, the largest proportion of pupils is of average and lower ability with literacy levels below the national levels. Four per cent of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. This figure is higher than the national average of 2.6%. A further 26% of pupils have special educational needs but no statement. This figure is also higher than the national average of 17.6%. The predominant language of the pupils is English and 7% of the school's population consists of minority ethnic pupils. Seven pupils are looked after by the local authority.

After Year 11, only around half of pupils continue in full-time education, which is much lower than the local and national averages. A minority of pupils are known not to be in education, employment or training.

Since April 2011, the school has been part of a federation with Michaelston Community College. They share a governing body and an executive headteacher who took up his post in September 2011. The school currently has a temporary leadership team. A permanent headteacher for Glyn Derw High School and a deputy headteacher for the federation will join the leadership team in January 2012.

The individual school budget per pupil for Glyn Derw High School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £4,686 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the secondary schools in Cardiff is £5,183 and the minimum is £3,976. Glyn Derw High School is fourth out of the 20 secondary schools in Cardiff in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

The school's current performance	Unsatisfactory
The school's prospects for improvement	Adequate

Current performance

There are good features of the school's work. These include:

- a steady improvement in the performance of the core subjects at key stage 3;
- very few pupils leaving school without a recognised qualification;
- the increased range of vocational courses offered at key stage 4; and
- good quality teaching in the majority of classes.

However, current performance is unsatisfactory because:

- performance in most indicators at key stage 4 does not compare favourably with that of similar schools;
- differences between the performances of boys and girls in many indicators at key stage 4 are significantly wider than Wales and family averages;
- performance at the higher levels at key stage 3 is below that of similar schools;
- attendance has not improved enough over the last few years and remains below that of similar schools;
- the development of skills across the curriculum is not yet impacting well enough to raise standards;
- in a minority of classes, teachers do not set high enough expectations for pupils' progress; and
- the school council is not impacting on school policy or decision-making and has not nominated associate pupil governors.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are judged as adequate because:

- the executive headteacher and temporary senior leadership team have a secure understanding of the school's areas for improvement and have started to address them;
- there is an increasing culture of self-evaluation and many middle managers understand the performance of their subject areas well;
- the school improvement plan focuses appropriately on raising standards;
- middle leaders are not always challenged and held to account rigorously enough; and
- the school has not addressed important recommendations from the previous section 28 report.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the staff and governors of Glyn Derw High School need to:

- R1 raise standards in all subjects at key stage 4 and the attainment of boys and more able pupils at key stage 3 and key stage 4;
- R2 improve attendance;
- R3 strengthen provision to develop pupils' skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- R4 improve the quality of teaching and focus particularly on increasing the progress pupils make during lessons;
- R5 develop the role of the governing body so that they meet all statutory requirements; and
- R6 strengthen the role and voice of the school council and elect associate pupil governors.

What happens next?

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress 12 months after the publication of this report.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Unsatisfactory

Standards: Unsatisfactory

Performance at key stage 3 has improved over the last four years and is now above that of similar schools. However performance at the higher levels is not as strong. Pupils' progress from the previous key stage for 2010 and 2011 meets expectations and is generally good.

Performance at key stage 4 in most indicators, including those that include English and mathematics, improved in 2011 but were still below what they were in 2008. English results declined in the two years up to 2010, although data shows a rise in 2011. Performance levels in mathematics declined between 2007 and 2010, although data for 2011 shows an increase. Pupils do not progress as well as expected in most indicators and, although there has been an improvement in 2011, standards at key stage 4 remain below those of similar schools.

Over the last few years, very few pupils left the school without a recognised qualification. However, the percentage of pupils known not to be education, employment or training after Year 11 is very high.

Performance in the sixth form is significantly below expectations.

At key stage 4, there are significant differences in the performance of girls and boys, particularly in those qualifications that include English and mathematics. Pupils eligible for free school meals do not achieve as well as expected at key stage 3 and key stage 4. In most indicators, there is a large gap between their performance and that of those not eligible for free school meals. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as expected.

In around half of lessons, pupils progress well in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. The majority of pupils work well in pairs and small groups, are co-operative, and make productive use of their time. The majority of pupils listen well to each other, although a minority of pupils lack confidence when presenting their views to their peers.

The majority of pupils are confident readers, although a few pupils do not always read with expression or understand fully what they have read. At key stage 3, pupils who participate in 'catch up' and intervention programmes make good progress with their reading. The majority of pupils write accurately and use appropriate subject-specific vocabulary. A few re-draft their work appropriately following feedback from teachers. A minority of pupils, including the more able pupils, write for a range of purposes and audiences, make inferences between text and reach detailed conclusions. Although the majority of pupils take care with the presentation of their work, a few pupils have incomplete or missing work in their books.

The numeracy skills of the majority of pupils are underdeveloped.

In Welsh second language at key stage 3, results have improved over the last three years and are now above the family average. At key stage 4, nearly all pupils follow a Welsh second language course. They have positive attitudes towards learning Welsh and the number of pupils entered for examinations has increased significantly over the last few years. However, not all pupils are entered for a formal qualification and very few pupils are entered for the GCSE full course.

Wellbeing: Adequate

Many pupils feel safe in school and consider that the school deals well with bullying. They value support structures such as the new peer buddy scheme and the school counselling service. Many pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and regular exercise. The school nutrition action group has raised pupils' awareness of healthy eating and has influenced the menu choices offered in the canteen. Participation rates in extra-curricular activities are generally good.

The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Many pupils are well motivated and show positive attitudes to learning. However, a minority of pupils disrupt lessons when there is a lack of pace and challenge or where tasks are not adapted well enough to suit their needs. Most pupils are punctual to lessons and registration periods.

Attendance does not compare favourably with that of similar schools and there has been no improvement over the last three years. Attendance levels are amongst the lower 50% of those for similar schools and below the expected level.

The school council is at an early stage of development but is progressing as a worthwhile forum. Pupils were recently involved in the appointment of the executive headteacher and other senior leaders. However, they do not play a full role in developing key school policies and plans. Pupils have not nominated associate pupil governors.

A minority of pupils are involved in a range of community projects, such as the 'silver surfers' group, drama productions and a recent collaboration with AGE Concern. Older pupils are involved in a number of peer mentoring schemes and support younger pupils effectively. Many pupils acquire the necessary skills for life and work outside school.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Adequate

In key stage 3, the school offers an appropriate range of learning experiences which include an appropriately planned integrated curriculum in Year 7. At key stage 4, the school offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses. There is suitable specific provision for those key stage 4 pupils whose needs are not met by a traditional curriculum. Nevertheless, the broadening of the curriculum has not yet contributed to improvements in the main performance indicators. The school provides a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities.

The small number of students in the sixth form can access a wide range of courses as part of the western partnership.

Opportunities are made available in nearly all subjects to develop pupils' skills in literacy and information and communication technology. These skills are indicated in departmental schemes of work. The majority of teachers use a variety of strategies well to develop key skills into lessons. However, a minority of teachers do not fully integrate skills provision and progression into their teaching. Although the provision for skills is appropriately co-ordinated and monitored, opportunities to develop numeracy skills and higher-order literacy skills are not well embedded into schemes of work or lesson planning.

The Welsh dimension is developing well across the curriculum. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of Welsh culture. The recently amended Welsh language development policy sets out the school's expectations and an increasing number of staff and pupils enthusiastically use Welsh phrases and Welsh greetings during lessons.

The school has sound provision for education for sustainable development and global citizenship. An eco-group meets regularly and, on occasion, raises awareness of issues during school assemblies. However, pupils have not influenced any significant changes in school practice. Enrichment days are organised to focus on global citizenship. These are impacting positively on pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures and countries.

Teaching: Adequate

Relationships between pupils and teachers are generally very good and many teachers manage behaviour effectively. Many teachers have good subject knowledge. The majority plan their lessons well and set clear learning objectives to meet the needs of pupils. These lessons progress at a good pace and consist of an appropriate range of activities to engage pupils. It is only in a minority of lessons that teachers identify worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills. Also, only in a minority of lessons, teachers ask very probing and thoughtful questions that encourage pupils to think and provide more extended oral responses.

Overall, the expectations of a minority of teachers are too low. They do not engage pupils well enough and do not adapt the work to meet the different needs of pupils, particularly those of higher ability. Consequently, pupils do not make enough progress.

Most teachers mark work regularly and provide appropriate oral feedback to pupils during lessons. However, the quality of written feedback varies unduly between and within departments, and does not always provide pupils with a clear idea of how to improve their work. A few teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their own work and that of other pupils, but this practice is not widespread.

An electronic pupil tracking system is used effectively to monitor pupil progress and to identify those who are underachieving. There are appropriate intervention strategies, such as the use of mentors, to provide support for pupils who are

underachieving. Teachers use appropriate baseline data to set relevant and, sometimes, challenging targets.

The annual reports to parents on pupil progress are informative and clearly set out the strengths and areas for improvement.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate

The school generally supports pupils well and provides appropriate care and guidance. Pupils benefit from a well delivered, suitable and relevant personal and social education programme. The programme makes appropriate use of a small number of outside speakers from the local police and local charities.

The school promotes well pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Pupils participate well in school assemblies. The whole-school 'thought for the week' is used effectively to allow pupils time to reflect and explore their beliefs.

The school provides pupils with effective individual support and access to a wide range of information on issues such as behaviour, emotional health and wellbeing. Collaborative arrangements with specialist support agencies are good and provide vulnerable pupils with effective support. This has contributed to a reduction in the number of pupils who leave school without a recognised qualification. However, attendance levels still remain low.

Pupils are given a suitable range of information for course choices at both key stage 4 and post-16. They are supported appropriately to make decisions. Despite this, the number of pupils not in education, employment or training after Year 11 is very high.

Intervention programmes to improve pupils' literacy skills at key stage 3 are generally well planned and have had a positive impact. However, a few learners miss valuable English lessons to attend reading support. Support for older pupils is underdeveloped.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is generally effective. The school identifies their needs well. Individual education plans are of an appropriate standard. Pupils are encouraged to take part in completing their individual education plans and to set their own targets. However, these are not used to monitor and track pupils' progress. The school has regular meetings with parents of pupils with additional learning needs to provide feedback and discuss progress.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Unsatisfactory

The school is an inclusive community and nearly all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. It is beginning to challenge pupils' choice of subjects and encourage them to consider career opportunities away from the normal stereotypes. The school does not meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and has not produced an action plan.

The external fabric of most of the building is in a poor condition, as are the playground surfaces. Windows in a minority of classrooms do not open to allow sufficient ventilation and pupils' toilets are unsatisfactory. These important shortcomings have a negative impact on pupils' learning experiences.

The interior décor and wall displays enhance the learning environment, and most classrooms are of sufficient size for the pupils in them. The learning centre is a bright and interesting learning environment and the community garden is an attractive outdoor space at the heart of the school. The school and its grounds are well maintained, and kept clean and tidy.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Adequate
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Leadership: Adequate

The structure and membership of the senior leadership team have changed considerably over the last eighteen months. The temporary leadership team has maintained successfully the school's management, evaluation and planning cycles.

The executive headteacher has a very secure understanding of the school's performance and of issues that need to be addressed. He and the temporary leadership team communicate a clear vision for the school to the staff and pupils. Current and future roles and structures are clearly defined and coherent. However, middle leaders are not always challenged and held to account rigorously enough.

Day-to-day management and organisation are good, and the school has an appropriate calendar of meetings for teams and managers. These meetings focus well on issues in the school improvement plan, especially those related to teaching, learning and standards. These changes have impacted positively on standards in key stage 3, but not yet in key stage 4. Action to address under-performance in several important areas, and to improve standards generally, has strengthened this term.

The new governing body of the federation has already formed appropriate committees and has good plans for its future operations. Members have an appropriate understanding of their role as a critical friend and have begun to challenge underperformance. However, the governing body does not fulfil a few statutory requirements.

The school responds appropriately to local and national priorities. It is addressing weaknesses in literacy, but has been late in starting this work, and has begun to take action to address low standards in numeracy. It is working well within the western partnership in Cardiff local authority to provide a good range of courses in key stage 4 and the sixth form.

Improving quality: Adequate

The executive headteacher and temporary leadership team have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school's self-evaluation report provides a satisfactory analysis of performance data. The

school's self-evaluation processes are clearly understood and many middle managers provide a range of first-hand evidence that feeds appropriately into the whole-school report. There is a developing culture of self-evaluation and improvement planning within an agreed programme of activities. Many middle managers understand the performance of their subject areas well. However, there is too much inconsistency in how rigorously middle managers observe classroom lessons, scrutinise pupils' work and analyse data.

The school improvement plan has appropriate priorities that focus on raising standards. However, success criteria for the actions are not always sufficiently specific or measurable and the plan does not include details of costs. All subject areas produce annual departmental improvement plans focusing on improving standards of achievement, although a few do not include targets that are challenging enough. Links between the whole-school plan and many departmental plans are also not clear enough.

The school does not systematically collect the views of other stakeholders, particularly parents or carers. Pupil voice is underdeveloped and pupils do not make a prominent contribution to self-evaluation.

All teachers are involved in a range of working groups within the school. These focus appropriately on teaching, learning and curriculum issues, although the school does not work with other schools on these matters. The impact of these groups on raising standards and improving the quality of provision has not been evaluated. Although there are informal arrangements for peer observation, there is no whole-school approach to ensure that all staff have the opportunity to observe and share best practice in teaching.

The school has not made enough progress in addressing recommendations from the previous inspection. In particular, there has been slow progress on addressing the recommendations about standards in key stage 4, mathematics and attendance.

Partnership working: Adequate

The school works effectively with a range of partners. A number of links are organised well by the community managers at the learning resource centre. The learning resource centre is also successful in encouraging parents and other members of the community to come into the school for a wide range of community activities and courses. However formal links with parents are ineffective and the school has not been successful in getting many parents to attend important events such as progress evenings.

Links with partner primary schools have led to a suitable action plan to raise standards in the core subjects and Welsh. The outcomes have involved joint curriculum planning and a shared understanding of skills requirements and assessment levels. However, aspects of transition are at an early stage.

Links with other secondary schools and the further education college provide curriculum options in subjects that are not available at Glyn Derw. A few pupils attend courses provided by partners in subjects such as theatrical make-up and car

mechanics. Youth mentors also provide support for disaffected pupils, some of whom have lessons at Ely youth club. These partnerships impact positively on pupils' learning experiences, particularly those for whom the traditional curriculum is not appropriate.

With the exception of the governing body and executive headteacher, the school is at an early stage of developing formal links with Michaelston Community College.

Resource management: Unsatisfactory

The school provides a suitable curriculum, although a minority of teaching staff are deployed outside their own area of expertise. In a few subjects this has had an adverse impact on standards.

The school uses available funding well to maintain learning and social areas in a good state of repair and to ensure that teachers have enough appropriate learning resources and equipment. Governors have the relevant information to enable them to contribute to financial decisions and the school has appropriate procedures to plan and monitor expenditure and to keep it within agreed limits.

The school is currently reviewing staffing, curriculum priorities and costs in order to meet future budget constraints. Overall, the school manages its resources well.

Standards of achievement are below average for most indicators when compared with those of similar schools and below expectations. As a result, the school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

At key stage 3 over the last four years, achievement of the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum) has improved steadily and is above the family average. When compared with similar schools based on the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school has been in the upper 50% for the last four years. In English, performance has been variable. In 2011, performance in English was slightly above the family average but in the lower 50% of that for similar schools based on free school meal benchmarks. Performance at level 6 and above has not shown a clear trend of improvement and has been below the family average for the last four years. Performance in mathematics has improved steadily over the last four years. It is above the family average and in the upper 50% of that for similar schools in terms of free school meal benchmarks. At level 6 or above, mathematics performance improved in 2011 following a decline the previous year. Science performance declined in 2011; it is still above the family average, but in the lower 50% of that for similar schools in terms of free school meal benchmarks. At level 6 or above, performance in science improved in 2011 following a decline the previous year. Pupils' progress from the previous key stage for 2010 is as expected.

In key stage 4 in 2011, the proportion of pupils attaining the level 2 threshold (equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C) including English or Welsh and mathematics showed a rise from 2010, but it is still lower than it was in 2008. Performance is still in the lowest quarter of that for similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and below the family average. Performance in the core subject indicator has generally declined since 2007. However, there has been a five percentage point improvement in 2011 and performance is now similar to that in 2007. This places the school in the lower 50% of similar schools in terms of free school meal benchmarks but slightly above the family average for the first time since 2007. The school's performance in the level 2 threshold has generally declined over the last four years. In 2011, there was a slight improvement; however, performance remains significantly below the family average and has been the bottom quarter of that for similar schools in terms of free school meals benchmarks for the last three years. Performance in the level 1 threshold (equivalent to five GCSEs at grade D to G) declined between 2008 and 2010, but 2011 shows a very small improvement. It is still below the family average and has dipped to the lowest quarter of that for similar schools in terms of free school meal benchmarks. Since 2009, performance in the capped points score (comprising the best eight results from all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the age of 16) has been below the family average and in the lowest quarter in terms of free school meal benchmarks.

English results declined over the three years up to 2010, but there was an improvement in 2011. Performance is now slightly above the family average for the first time but in the lowest quarter of that for similar schools in terms of free school meal benchmarks. Performance in mathematics declined steadily up to 2010, but there was a slight improvement in 2011. Despite this, performance in 2011 is still

below the family average and in the lowest quarter of that for similar schools in terms of free school meal benchmarks.

In key stage 4, pupils' progress is unsatisfactory in all key indicators.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Estyn received responses from 227 pupils selected at random from across the age range.

Many pupils indicate that they feel safe in school, that the school deals well with any bullying and that there is someone to talk to if they are worried. Many say that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and that there are plenty of opportunities for them to get regular exercise. Most pupils believe that they are doing well in school. Many pupils report that teachers help them to learn and make progress and encourage them to do things for themselves and to take on responsibility, and that they have enough books and equipment to do their work. The majority consider that homework helps them to understand and improve their work.

Many pupils say that the school helps them to understand and respect people from other backgrounds and that staff respect them and their background and treat all pupils fairly and with respect. However around half do not think that pupils behave well and that they can get their work done, and a significant minority do not believe that the school listens to their views and makes the changes they suggest. Many pupils report that the school helps them to be ready for college or their working life. Many pupils in key stage 4 and post-16 feel that they were given good advice for choosing courses.

Responses to learner questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received (fewer than 10).

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Catherine Evans	Reporting Inspector
Ray Owen	Team Inspector
Sue Morgan	Team Inspector
Gill Sims	Team Inspector
Steffan James	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Alwyn Thomas	Peer Inspector
Paula Stevens	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

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