

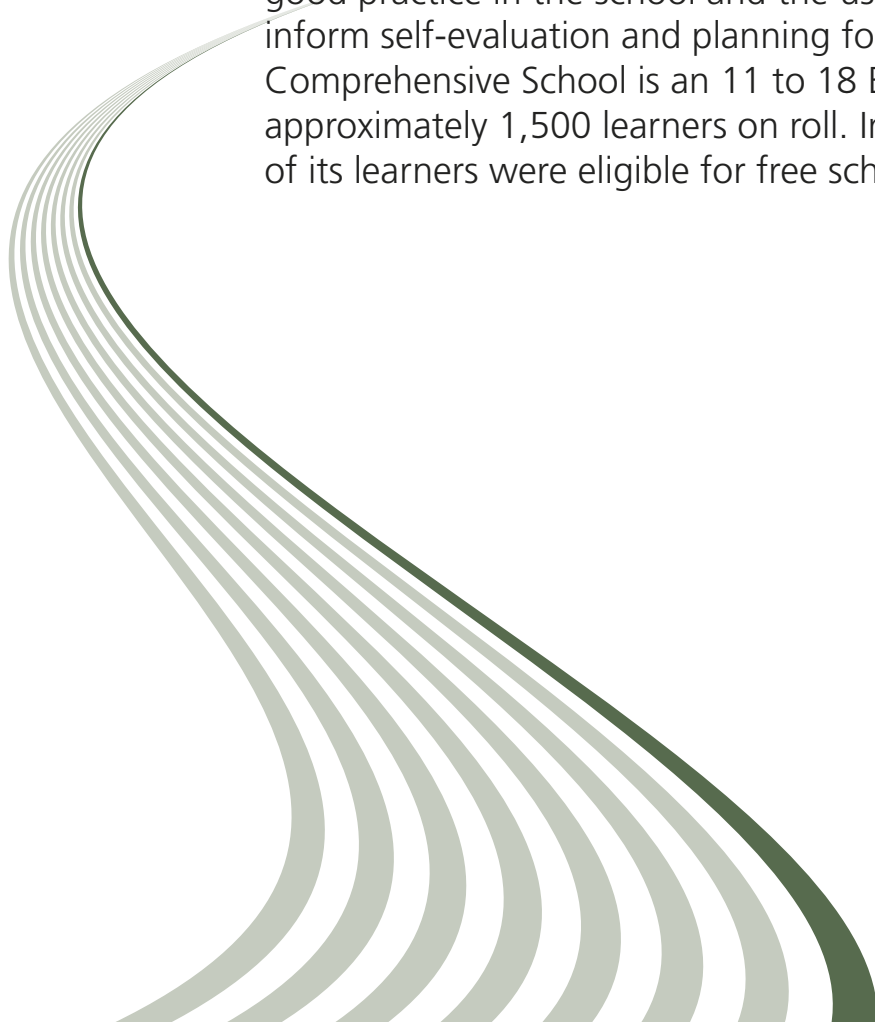


## Developing and sharing practice

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni  
and Caerleon Comprehensive School

### Context

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni is a Welsh-medium secondary school in the Rhymney Valley. It has over 1,400 learners, aged 11 to 18. The school is located at campuses at Fleur-de-lys and at Caerphilly. In 2014 around 13 per cent of its learners were eligible for free school meals. Estyn has highlighted many aspects of good practice in the school and the use of family networks to inform self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Caerleon Comprehensive School is an 11 to 18 English-medium school with approximately 1,500 learners on roll. In 2014 less than 6 per cent of its learners were eligible for free school meals.



### Impact

Raising Standards Officers are working with identified learners to support their progress.

Data managers at both schools have been able to refine the use of their systems in order to maximise the impact of the information held by the schools.

Staff at both Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni and Caerleon Comprehensive School developed an understanding of the issues facing schools in different contexts.

### Focus

Staff at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni believed that a Welsh-medium school and an English-medium school could work in partnership. As was noted by the headteacher 'good practice is good practice regardless of language'. The key issue was a need for an open dialogue about priorities and a willingness to share and learn from one another.

## What they did

### Establishing working relationships

The partnership work comprised meetings at senior leader level. The deputies developed an effective working relationship and could see how both schools could benefit from the partnership. This was approached sensitively by Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni, who were aware of both schools' strong reputations. They felt that the relationship between senior leaders was a very important factor if the work was to succeed.

Senior leaders met with each other and shared ideas and resources for developing provision in the core subjects, especially Welsh.

### Outcomes

Senior leaders at both schools developed an understanding of the distinctive challenges facing the two schools.

They shared ideas about how the curriculum and assessment arrangements could be developed further.

### Developing support systems

The Raising Standards Officer (RSO) post was a feature of the work at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni and this had been replicated at Caerleon Comprehensive. In Caerleon Comprehensive, these roles were created by allocating the responsibility to three existing members of staff. Each one had 12 to 16 learners with whom they worked on a regular basis. They focused on all aspects of the curriculum and identified the key components of success for each pupil with whom they worked. In Caerleon Comprehensive, the RSOs worked with all learners who were on grade borderlines (e.g. A\*/A, A/B, B/C) as well as C/D.

#### Outcome

The RSOs worked to bolster the performance of learners at grade borderline.

### Developing school systems

Some of the partnership funding was used to appoint a Data Manager at Caerleon Comprehensive. The data manager worked closely with the equivalent postholder at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni to discuss ways in which they could maximise the use of school data and the tracking model used in Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni.

#### Outcome

Caerleon Comprehensive School benefited from the dialogue between the data managers. This led to improvements in the use of school data and learner tracking outcomes.

### Self-reflection

Senior leaders at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni believed that the partnership had promoted self-reflection, in particular as they had re-examined aspects of the way they organised the curriculum. As the headteacher noted, 'We took a step back and realised what we needed to do. The partnership gave us the opportunity to step back to see how we can improve'. This led them to consider issues such as how the curriculum was structured, how to support individuals to achieve their full potential, and the arguments for and against different assessment practices.

### Outcome

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni reflected on its own systems and processes in the light of what they had seen in another school.

### Why it worked

- Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni approached the task with the view that different language and socio-economic contexts should not be a barrier to the partnership's work.
- They worked on the basis that certain approaches and ways of working represent good practice whatever the language medium of the school.
- Caerleon Comprehensive School engaged with the notion of RSOs and tailored the role to meet their own requirements.
- There was an open dialogue between the data managers at both schools which enabled them to share practice and ideas about how they could use school and learner-level data more effectively.

### Contact details

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