



**The NACE Cymru Challenge Award  
Re-accreditation Report  
Cwmclydach Primary School, Tonypanyd**

**Overarching summary statement:**

Cwmclydach Primary School is in the village of Clydach Vale near Tonypanyd in Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority. There are 210 full time pupils on roll aged between 3-11 years. There are more than 30 pupils attending the Nursery class all day, whilst one of the local authority's Foundation Phase Nurture classes is located at the school. Nearly all pupils are of white/British origin and English is the first language for nearly all pupils. A high percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is much higher than the national and local averages for this deprived area.

The school's environment provides exceptional resources both indoor and outdoor, allowing pupils to work independently within various small learning areas ('happy places'), and throughout the school inspirational quotes, created by the pupils, are displayed on the walls e.g. "create your rainbow every day", "mistakes are proof that you are trying". The senior leadership team (SLT), led by a new head teacher (in post since Sept 2021) and a MAT/EAT co-ordinator (in post for more than 30 years), ensure the NACE philosophy is exceptionally instilled in this setting. All staff observed and engaged with had impressive knowledge and understanding of their subjects and are outstanding role models, determined to extend a variety of opportunities in order to enhance provision for all learners including the MAT pupils.

This is the school's second re-accreditation of the NACE Challenge Award and, due to the experience of the MAT/ET co-ordinator, the written documentation scrutinised before the visit was of an extremely high standard.

**Progress towards previously identified areas for development:**

The school has made excellent progress in addressing all the areas for development identified during the previous re-accreditation visit:

- All members of staff, under the guidance of the head teacher and the MAT/EAT co-ordinator, support and ensure INSET training to nurture MAT and EAT pupils in the school. This has been very successful during the pandemic by means of virtual meetings with parents and the establishment of a digital communication application (Seesaw) which develops links between parents and the school and includes examples of pupils' work sent home via this platform.
- Learning resources for MAT/EAT pupils are always considered and shared throughout the foundation and KS2 phases. E.g. Chromebooks used to encourage independent learning.
- Further improvements are planned regarding sharing information throughout the school community on the provision for all pupils including MAT/EAT pupils e.g. 'buddy pairs', enrichment themed days with partner classes (Years 3 & 4 collaborating with partner schools on STEM projects). The school makes effective use of the skills of a member of staff, who was an advisor for the county, to foster links with projects throughout Wales e.g. Bryn Primary school, Llanelli which encourages pupils to gain and share knowledge on scientific subjects.
- Transition provision is effective with meetings arranged between parents and staff of Nantgwyn Secondary school.
- Having observed three lessons in Years 1 and 2, 4 and 5 (wellbeing, maths and science, plenary evaluation lesson in Year 5) opportunities were given for pupils to discuss the content of the lessons,

and the knowledge and understanding of the teachers of complicated concepts was extremely impressive e.g. the use of the medical vocabulary related to the brain in Years 1 and 2.

- During the visit some conversational Welsh was noted throughout the school with some pupils eager to show further understanding of their bilingual skills.
- Staff are well aware of the external pressures on talented pupils and have an effective mentoring system in place to support students. The school has established a dedicated wellbeing area in each classroom for pupils as well as having a Family Engagement Officer employed by the school to share good practice with the home. The school recognises this will be most advantageous for MAT/EAT pupils who at times need to have support for the pressures they may feel for continually attaining high standards i.e. striving for perfectionism.
- Pupils are always encouraged to become autonomous, resourceful, innovative, and responsible members of the school and their communities through supportive challenge, high expectations and with the safe knowledge that their opinions are respected. This was evident during discussions with pupil voice groups during the visit e.g. school council, eco and transition.
- The pupils stated there was a special bond between them and staff, possibly due to the area's close knit community aspect. This was endorsed by the MAT/EAT co-ordinator who, having been at the school for more than 30 years, knew the family backgrounds of the pupils.

#### **Key strengths:**

- Pupils show care and respect to visitors and everyone around the school and in the classrooms with excellent engagement and enthusiasm for learning in every lesson observed.
- The staff engaged with during the visit are excellent role models, and used direct modelling to promote extended wellbeing language e.g. "talk, pair, share", "bounce questions", which encouraged an atmosphere of collaboration and positive behaviour.
- Pupils demonstrated insightful knowledge and understanding when discussing complex topics e.g. the brain. They consistently challenged themselves and others to go beyond the set task, taking responsibility for their own learning e.g. given set funds to procure produce for the school allotment.
- A range of strategies is used to identify pupils who are more able and talented, and information is shared extensively with staff so that all pupils are well known and their progress is tracked systematically. 'Taith 360' has been developed by Assessment Foundation (INCERTS) as a programme used throughout Wales to identify the 'progression steps' in the Curriculum for Wales.
- The school is fully involved with teachers undertaking research in pairs with performance management including opportunities to develop MAT/EAT skills while identifying pupils during a cycle of moderation and assessment. Although all pupils are challenged, MAT/EAT pupils are identified and their progression ensured by means of questionnaires and the school's tracking system.

#### **Teaching and learning:**

- The abilities of the pupils interviewed were impressive e.g. one pupil spoke of her music, maths and IT accomplishments whilst her brother, a former pupil of the school, was supported in furthering his music prowess at the Cathedral School Llandaff, Cardiff.
- Pupils noted that the encouragement and individual virtual tutoring they received during the pandemic closures made them feel lucky to attend a school where every teacher is able to transmit their passion, knowledge and deep understanding of their subjects. Despite the challenges of blended learning during the pandemic, the school ensured visits to the home and phone calls to support the emotional and mental wellbeing of pupils.
- Senior leaders stress the importance of impressing on pupils that they can achieve anything they set their minds to and this results in pupils participating confidently in various activities e.g. book competitions and communicating with the author Jenny Sullivan in France. She is writing a book about the school as well as proof reading literary work by MAT/EAT pupils.
- Links have also been made with writer Rob Jones who visits the school to help improve the reading and writing of MAT/EAT pupils. Cwmclydach's case study of Year 5 and 6 pupils who attended his sessions was extremely impressive as he had noted that an interest in reading could improve the

writing skills of the pupils. Having spoken to him during the visit, and read the case study, it was impressive to see that at the beginning of his work only 50% of the pupils enjoyed reading, but by the end of the case study, more than 83.5% of the pupils not only enjoyed the books but their writing had also improved. The books selected and discussed were of an above average reading age.

- Pupil voice is an integral part of the school's ethos, with learners confirming they are able to choose the best way to learn. They are given strategies for independent learning and the school garden provides not only opportunities to learn about environmental issues but also a haven for wellbeing.

#### **Areas for Development**

##### **Further improve progress and achievement by:**

- When circumstances allow, continue to evaluate the impact of questioning skills, both in the classroom and at home through the use of the digital communication platform (Seesaw) so that pupil and parents can evaluate further the content of individual pieces of work.
- Develop further initiatives to help staff and pupils prepare for the Curriculum for Wales, especially with wellbeing strategies – a new aspect noted as an area for learning.

##### **Plan for succession by:**

- Develop further blended learning resources/platforms and support between the school and home e.g. bilingual digital applications that can ensure independent language learning.

##### **Teaching and learning:**

- Continue to share excellent practice so that independent learning is developed consistently, and opportunities are afforded for pupils to extend their skills in all aspects of school life.
- Further develop all students' skills of evaluation and reflection by continuing to provide suitable extended opportunities, extra-curricular activities and through pupil voice groups e.g. involvement in school policies.
- Continue to share the excellent practices and approaches with other schools in the cluster and beyond as opportunities arise e.g. MAT areas of expertise as seen on NACE website (Assessment Framework).

**Assessors: Rhiannon Jenkins**

**Signatures: Rhiannon Wynn Jenkins**

**Date: 16.03.22**

**Date for next re-accreditation: March 2025**