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### **Dolau Primary School – green, green class of home**

While Rhondda Cynon Taf lies in the heart of the South Wales valley, going green is rapidly meaning much more to the area's schools than simply enjoying the landscape around them. Having more efficient kitchens is part of this and one primary school which delivers education to children from Llanharan, Brynnau, Pencoed and Llanhari in English and Welsh, is leading the way when it comes to new, environmentally friendly catering facilities, with cutting edge equipment supplied by the experts at MKN.

Pupils arriving at the Bridgend Road school this term were greeted by a new eco-friendly, state-of-the-art block, complete with biomass boiler, solar panels and rainwater harvesting. Built with green materials using environmentally sound practices, the facility has 10 new classrooms, new dining hall and kitchen facility, staff room, offices, activity and soft play areas, with plans to develop a woodland area on site for an outdoor education environment.



Coordinated by the in house school catering provider RCT Catering Services and its principal officer for the primary sector Gill Jones, the project also needed to include a groundbreaking, bespoke kitchen, specially designed to meet the needs of the new



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21<sup>st</sup> century block. Improving efficiency was one challenge, making operations more sustainable was another. “About five years ago, we started becoming very concerned that we were replacing equipment in schools that were 25-30 years old with equipment that had a six or seven year life span. Our goal was to find a manufacturer that was building equipment made to last and after a year searching the market, we found MKN, who we have worked with ever since.” A MKN magnetic/electric two zone induction hob table, two HansDampf gold 10.1 combi-ovens, a four ring gas burner and a preparation counter have been installed. Anne Bull head of catering services said, “MKN’s combination ovens, that use ‘state of the art technology’ are certainly the way forward. However, we needed to remember the catering staff are entering ‘unchartered territory’ in terms of moving away from the more traditional cooking methods.” “The key is the acceptance by staff to use the new equipment to its full potential. This has been achieved by working in partnership with MKN who have provided full training about induction cooking, which is a completely different approach, as well as back up support to the kitchen staff.

In the true spirit of sustainability, Dolau Primary’s old kitchen will be developed and used to run cooking classes for pupils to meet the new curriculum requirements in Wales and to offer cooking courses for parents, carers, and grandparents.

