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Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on  
Gladstone Primary School  
Gladstone Road  
Barry  
CF62 8NA**

**Date of inspection: November 2010**

**by**

**Michael T. Ridout**

**for**

**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:

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

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

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## Context

Gladstone Primary School is situated in the seaside town of Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan. There are 383 pupils on roll aged between three and eleven years. Since the last inspection in 2004 the number of pupils and organisation of classes has remained similar. The current head teacher was appointed in September 2006. Pupils are taught in 15 classes in two traditionally designed buildings that are over 100 years old. Improvements to the accommodation and grounds provide for the Foundation Phase.

The school reports that the locality is economically disadvantaged. Twenty-six per cent of pupils receive free school meals. Twenty per cent have additional learning needs (ALN), including 0.5 per cent with statements of special educational need (SEN). Twelve pupils were temporarily excluded in the last twelve months. Ninety-one per cent are White British and nine per cent are from ethnic minority backgrounds, including 4.6 per cent for whom English is an additional language. One per cent is fluent in Welsh.

The population in the school's catchment area is changing with a high number of families moving. In 2009/10 around one third of pupils in Year 6 were transient. There is an established trend of mobility.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Gladstone Primary School is £3,117, which compares with a maximum of £4,491 and a minimum of £2,756 for primary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan. The school has the 39th highest budget per pupil out of the 46 primary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

Although performance at the end of key stage 2 (KS2) is good and there are strengths in learning, teaching and leadership, the school's current performance is adequate because:

- provision is slow to raise standards in English and mathematics in key stage 1 (KS1);
- the effectiveness of learning experiences in meeting the range of pupils' needs is uneven across the school;
- teaching and the use of assessment are not always good; and
- improvement strategies are not consistently established.

### Prospects for improvement

Although leadership is successful in improving overall standards, prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- systems for monitoring and evaluation often lack a clear focus on standards;
- targets in the school improvement plan (SIP) are very broad and lack measurable outcomes; and
- planning to secure their consistent implementation is not sufficiently focused to assure continued improvement.

## Recommendations

In order to improve further Gladstone Primary School needs to ensure:

- R1 more able pupils achieve high standards consistently\*;
- R2 learning experiences provide for the full range of pupils' needs;
- R3 appropriate progression in skills across areas of learning and subject programmes with adequate lesson time given to the full range of work;
- R4 greater consistency in teaching and the use of assessment; and
- R5 a sharper focus on standards in evaluation, monitoring and the SIP to help secure improvement strategies.

\* this issue is identified in the SIP.

### What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the school's progress.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

Baseline assessments show a minority of pupils enters reception with below average skills. The results for many at the end of Year 6 show good added value at level 4 and level 5.

Pupils' results in KS1, at level 2 and above, were above average in science and below in English and mathematics when compared with Wales, the LA and a family of schools with similar circumstances. The trend is of similar results. In comparison with similar schools nationally, these results are in the lowest 25 per cent in English, mathematics and for the percentage attaining at least the expected level 2 in all three subjects. In science results were in the top 50 per cent.

The trend in pupils' results at the end of KS2 is fluctuating; a downward trend in English and mathematics was reversed in 2010. The trend in science is upward. The latest results at level 4 and above in English were above average when compared to the family of schools and Wales, and below the LA average. In mathematics and science results were above all three comparators. In comparison with similar schools nationally pupils' results in English and for the percentage attaining at least level 4 in all three subjects are broadly average. In mathematics and science results are above average. Overall, these results are in the top 50 per cent of schools.

In 2010 the percentage of pupils in KS1 achieving level 3 in English, mathematics and science was well below all three comparators. In KS2 the percentage achieving level 5 in English, mathematics and science was above average when compared to the family of schools and below the LA. These results were above average compared with Wales in mathematics, and below in English and science.

Overall, girls performed better than boys in 2010. In KS1 girls performed better than boys in all aspects at level 2, but boys performed better at level 3 in mathematics and science. In KS2 girls performed better than boys in all aspects at level 4, but at level 5 boys performed better than girls.

By the end of Year 6 the majority of pupils make good overall progress although progress is uneven across the school, especially for more able pupils. Those with ALN achieve very well in relation to their targets and the very few having English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers.

Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are generally good. Older pupils in both key stages have well developed speaking and listening skills; they gain competence in reading and in Year 6 comprehension skills are well developed. Standards in writing are improving and in Year 6 standards are consistently good. Skills in using information communications technology (ICT) are very well developed at the end of KS2, but the skills of some younger pupils are less secure.

Nearly all pupils are enthusiastic learners. Most work well with others and the independent learning skills of older pupils are good. Many make good progress in the acquisition of skills, but progress in problem solving and creative skills is inconsistent.

Pupils make good progress in Welsh language development with the majority reaching expected standards by the end of KS2. Throughout the school pupils are confident to initiate simple conversations with others.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to keeping healthy and safe and recognise the importance of exercise and eating a healthy diet. Their views confirm that they feel safe in school and that members of staff deal firmly with any bullying. Pupils' confidence and self esteem is nurtured successfully in a supportive environment. Standards of behaviour are good and most pupils are keen to learn. They show respect, courtesy and care for others, with older pupils taking responsibility for their own welfare and that of others. Where lessons engage and challenge pupils' thinking they sustain interest and concentrate well.

The trend in attendance is improving, although rates are below average compared with similar schools.

In a few classes pupils are appropriately involved in planning what and how they learn. They discuss the topics they will be covering, evaluate their work and are involved in planning the next steps.

Most pupils develop a good range of social and life skills and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities that promote awareness of life outside school. The eco committee and junior road safety officers are effectively involved in making decisions about school life and represent the views of their peers well. The school council is elected, but awareness of the democratic process and opportunities for councillors to seek suggestions and explain their actions are underdeveloped.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>
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<b>Adequate</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Adequate**

The provision includes a wide range of learning experiences covering the national curriculum and religious education, but its success in meeting the range of pupils' needs is variable. In the Foundation Phase and upper KS2 the learning experiences effectively promote continuity and progression. However, the provision is uneven across both key stages. A whole school framework of broad themes, linked to skills in the areas of learning and subjects, provides a good basis to guide teachers' planning and ensure adequate time is given to the full range of work. Implementation of this overview is at an early stage.

Collaborative lesson planning across year groups is well established. Provision to develop literacy and numeracy skills is generally good, but planning for ICT, problem

solving and creative skills is less consistent. The provision to develop Welsh language skills and promote pupils' understanding of the features and culture of Wales is good.

The school successfully promotes pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. It strongly encourages their involvement in healthy eating, energy conservation and initiatives to 'reduce, reuse and recycle'. A strong feature is the school's links through the Comenius Project and with charities that add a global dimension to the curriculum.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

Teaching in Foundation Phase classes is consistently good. This results from detailed planning and a shared understanding among practitioners of how to ensure continuity in learning. Activities are imaginative and a good range of teaching strategies is used.

In both key stages, teaching is more variable, although there are good examples, particularly with older pupils. Where teaching is good teachers have high expectations, good subject and assessment knowledge, their planning is well matched to need and they use a good variety of strategies. Where teaching has shortcomings the pace is often slow, lesson planning is insufficiently developed and the learning outcomes for pupils are unclear. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of assessment strategies are often insecure.

The school has good systems for assessment, including the use of standardised tests. The resulting data are used well to identify individual needs, but the use of assessments on a day-to-day basis to meet the range of needs is variable in its effectiveness. Teachers assess work in all subjects annually and this data is analysed to ensure that pupils make expected progress. Individual records of achievement are compiled and records to track progress over time are being developed. The school's involvement with other schools in standardising assessments in the core subjects helps to ensure consistency in end of key stage assessments.

Foundation Phase teachers and practitioners make good use of daily observations to assess progress; their comments show clearly what individual children can do and are used effectively to plan further activities. Furthermore, in Y6 detailed tracking records for the core subject skills are used well to guide lesson planning and secure the accuracy of teacher assessment.

A range of 'assessment for learning' strategies has been introduced and these are securely embedded in a few classes. Although pupils have individual targets and most teachers share learning objectives and success criteria their involvement in setting goals and using these to identify what they need to do to improve is not consistent.

Pupils' books are marked regularly although the quality of written comments and oral feedback is variable. End of year reports to parents are detailed and meet statutory requirements.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school successfully promotes tolerance and understanding through an ethos of working together and valuing the individual. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging and are confident to approach staff for guidance. The school strongly promotes healthy living and wellbeing and the provision for personal and social education, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, is good.

Appropriate policies and procedures to minimise harassment and bullying, and to promote good attendance and behaviour, are implemented consistently. Appropriate procedures are followed when temporary exclusion is necessary. Effective health and safety policies and procedures are in place. The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Good use is made of specialist services. This benefits pupils with specific learning difficulties. Arrangements to identify ALN are very good and these comply with the SEN code of practice. Parents are appropriately involved in the regular review of individual education plans and where appropriate statements of SEN. Small groups of pupils are targeted for specific interventions and these schemes are very successful in improving basic skills. The school successfully supports pupils with behavioural difficulties and identifies more able and talented pupils. It is developing provision to ensure additional challenge for these pupils within the curriculum.

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

The school has a strong ethos of inclusion and works hard to ensure equal opportunities. Mutual respect is encouraged and there is strong emphasis on recognising and celebrating diversity. Its policies and procedures promote good race relations and it meets its duties under the Race Relations and Disability Discrimination Acts.

The school site and buildings are clean and well maintained. Despite the limitations of a sloping site the outdoor accommodation provides well for learning and play, particularly in the Foundation Phase. Good use is made of the available space throughout the school, however classrooms are small for the number of pupils, particularly in KS2. This impacts on the range of learning experiences. Furthermore, disabled access is limited, particularly to the upper floor and some outdoor areas.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

The headteacher provides enthusiastic leadership and together with senior staff communicates high expectations. Good organisational arrangements successfully promote effective team working. The strategic deployment of senior teachers to improve standards is well considered. Staff roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and job descriptions are customised for individuals. Performance management is implemented in line with requirements. Effective procedures for appraisal have been extended to all members of staff.

A consultant provides detailed analysis of performance data and the headteacher raises staff awareness of issues, for example, to raise standards for more able pupils. Regular staff and team meetings provide the main forum to share and promote good practice. Although senior managers encourage the dissemination of good practice their success in securing greater consistency in provision is uneven.

The school's response to local and national priorities is good. Effective work is undertaken on transition and the moderation of standards. The school successfully implements the Foundation Phase and is steadily implementing the skills framework in KS2. Senior members of staff have an appropriate awareness of the school effectiveness framework.

The governing body (GB) is well informed and has a sound understanding of how the school is performing. It provides clear direction in managing resources and discussion of the SIP raises awareness of strategic priorities. Link governors visit the school and this helps inform their role as a critical partner. The GB sets appropriate targets for standards.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The school has a range of systems to monitor and evaluate standards and provision, but their impact in securing improvement is inconsistent. The senior management team has established a detailed and comprehensive annual schedule of activities, including sampling pupils' books, listening to learners, monitoring lessons and talking to colleagues. However, the outcomes of this monitoring, which contributes to subject reviews and action plans that inform the SIP, often lack a clear focus on standards. The views of stakeholders are considered and the targets in the SIP are prioritised and monitored regularly. A cycle of self-evaluation is established so that the outcomes of monitoring are linked to targets in the SIP. However, the targets are very broad and the success criteria lack measurable outcomes.

Several teachers are involved in professional learning communities, for example to develop strategies to cater for more able and talented pupils and to research reading skills in Year 2 and Year 3. The head and deputy are both involved in the Barry cluster of schools that provides strong networking opportunities to discuss teaching and learning. These networks result in visits to other schools and conferences to share good practice.

Established links with teacher training and further education establishments are mutually beneficial. All members of staff have good opportunities to attend a wide variety of training. Their participation enhances their professional development and promotes the sharing of best practice within the school.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has a positive partnership with parents and carers and keeps them well informed. Effective use is made of ICT to enhance communication and promote greater involvement in school life. Links with organisations within the community encourages their involvement in basic skills courses and support for clubs and visits involving their children.

There are good links with an independent nursery that ensures a smooth induction to school. Links with the receiving secondary schools are strong. Arrangements for transition are well established and shared initiatives involving KS2 and key stage 3 teachers helps to establish a mutual understanding of both standards and pedagogy. Furthermore, strong links with local businesses raise pupils' awareness of the world of work and introduces to them to new skills.

**Resource management: Good**

The school has sufficient qualified and experienced teaching and support to teach the curriculum effectively. They are deployed well in terms of their expertise and the organisation of classes is appropriate. In the main the school is well resourced and the learning resources are generally accessible. The recently improved provision of ICT equipment is enabling the greater integration of ICT within learning.

In line with statutory requirements there is appropriate provision of planning, preparation and assessment time for all teachers and all aspects of the workload agreement are in place. The arrangements successfully promote joint lesson planning, but procedures to monitor the impact of the teaching cover provided for classes are underdeveloped.

The financial resources available are allocated effectively according to criteria agreed by the GB. Spending plans are clearly linked to key priorities in the SIP. The school uses its resources effectively to secure good performance at the end of KS2. This represents good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Eleven parents completed the questionnaire and eight attended the pre-inspection meeting. These parents expressed very positive views of the school. Nearly all parents say that their children are happy, well behaved and feel safe in school. They indicate teachers are approachable and they value the good range of educational activities provided. Parents say they are proud of their children's achievements and express confidence in the headteacher and the staff. They feel the school is well run and particularly value the school's efforts to nurture consideration of others and to help their children understand the viewpoints of others. In the questionnaires a few parents stated the provision of homework and the information provided about their children's progress could be improved.

#### **Responses to learner questionnaires**

A large sample of pupils completed the questionnaire and inspectors talked with a representative sample of pupils during the inspection. These pupils say that they feel that they are treated well and the school is a happy place in which they feel safe. They know who to talk to if they are worried or upset and say that the adults in school help them learn and progress. Nearly all pupils think that the school teaches them about how to be healthy and say that they have plenty of opportunities for exercise. A very few pupils stated in the questionnaires that the behaviour of some children stopped them from getting on with their work and that misbehaviour at playtimes causes them concern. The predominant view of pupils in discussions is that misbehaviour is dealt with fairly and the rewards for good behaviour are effective.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Mr Michael T. Ridout	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Gillian Harrison	Team Inspector
Mrs Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Mrs Kate Prendergast	Peer Inspector
Mrs Caroline Newman	School Nominee

### Contractor:

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## Copies of the report

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## 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