



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Gladstone Primary School
Gladstone Road
Barry
CF62 8NA**

Date of inspection: January 2018

by

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

About Gladstone Primary School

Gladstone Primary School is in Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan. There are 448 pupils on roll aged between three and eleven years. This includes 52 pupils who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. There are 16 classes in two traditionally designed buildings that are over 100 years old.

Around 27% of pupils are eligible for free school meals compared with the Wales average of 19%. The school identifies about 21% as having additional learning needs, which is equal to the Wales average. A very few pupils have statements of special educational needs. Most pupils are white British. A very few pupils speak English an additional language or are fluent in Welsh. A very few pupils were temporarily excluded in the last 12 months and a very few are in the care of the local authority.

The headteacher took up her post in 2006. The school's last inspection was in November 2010.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

The headteacher and senior leadership team know the school well. They lead by example and ensure a strong team ethos among staff. Most pupils progress well as they move through the school. They develop as happy and confident learners who apply their literacy and numeracy skills effectively in their work. Nearly all pupils show interest and enjoyment of learning and they behave well, showing care and concern for others. Most teachers challenge pupils appropriately and deliver an engaging curriculum that helps many pupils to develop useful independent learning skills. All staff provide high quality care, support and guidance that enables nearly all pupils to take a full part in school life.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the school
- R2 Improve standards and pupils' enjoyment of reading
- R3 Raise pupil attendance
- R4 Ensure that individual education plans have clear and specific measurable targets

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the way the school uses nurture provision to support vulnerable pupils, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most children enter the nursery with skills that are around the expected level for their age. Overall most pupils make good progress as they move through the school and a few more able pupils make excellent progress. Most pupils develop a useful range of literacy and numeracy skills that they apply well in work across the curriculum. Nearly all pupils in the foundation phase and upper key stage 2 are inquisitive and enquiring independent learners. Most pupils with additional learning needs, or those who require a boost to their basic skills, make appropriate progress in line with their ability through participation in a wide range of appropriate intervention programmes.

As pupils move through the foundation phase, most speak with growing confidence and enthusiasm. For example, Year 2 pupils announce excitedly that two dimensional shapes are 'flat not fat!' By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils listen well in a range of contexts. They follow instructions, for instance when making cookies for the giant in Jack and the Beanstalk. Most pupils respond independently to a range of simple questions in Welsh, for example to describe how they are feeling or to say where they live. Pupils enjoy speaking Welsh and achieving a 'tocyn' for their efforts. Most foundation phase pupils make good progress in their writing skills. Nursery children enjoy making simple marks as the beginning of writing letters to characters in stories. Many older pupils use a rich vocabulary, such as describing armoured knights at Cardiff castle or 'stunning' houses for sale in Barry. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 apply their writing skills well in other areas of learning, for example to annotate their maps of the locality. Standards of presentation, including punctuation, are improving. Most pupils acquire good basic reading skills. They read fluently and with growing accuracy, although their joy in reading for pleasure is more limited.

In key stage 2, most pupils develop well as confident speakers and attentive listeners. For example, pupils receiving support for their wellbeing speak eloquently about issues that are troubling them and they listen carefully and with empathy when others are speaking. Many older pupils are confident to hold extended conversations in Welsh using the present and past tense, when they speak about themselves, their families and their likes and dislikes. For example, more able pupils in Year 6 explain in detail why they are having sandwiches for lunch rather than a school dinner. Most pupils are keen to extend their language skills and they use Welsh regularly during the school day. Overall standards of reading across the key stage are very variable and too many pupils lack enthusiasm for books. In lower key stage 2, many pupils have a limited range of skills to decode unfamiliar words. Older pupils are developing appropriate higher order reading skills, such as skimming and scanning, to find a specific piece of information. Pupils in Year 5, for instance, develop their research skills suitably, through searching for information about the lives of monarchs in Tudor times. In Year 6, pupils enjoy reading a simple Welsh book about leisure activities and demonstrate a good understanding of the text. In all year groups, pupils write for an appropriate range of purposes and audiences, including producing good quality extended pieces. For example, older pupils write poems about the jungle with skilful use of language to create vivid images successfully. Most apply punctuation with increasing accuracy at a level in line with their age and ability and

older pupils paragraph their work well. The standard of pupils' spelling, handwriting and presentation shows an improving trend. Most pupils apply their literacy skills well in a range of work across the curriculum.

By the end of Year 2, most pupils make good progress in their mathematical development. In number, for example, reception children count and pack a basketful of apples for Little Red Riding Hood, while Year 2 pupils solve problems using jigsaw pieces to a hundred. Most pupils apply their numeracy skills well during mathematical investigations in and around the class, such as when finding different shapes in the school grounds. They collect data about themselves and record this accurately on charts and diagrams.

In key stage 2, most pupils make good progress in mathematics. By Year 6, nearly all make calculations competently using a range of different strategies, for example using their knowledge of number facts, number lines, lattice grids or traditional column methods. By the end of the key stage, most pupils use and apply their skills well to solve problems. They explain their reasoning successfully. In Year 6, most pupils use their numeracy skills appropriately in other areas of the curriculum, for example when constructing graphs and tables as part of an investigation in science. However, in other year groups, pupils do not always apply their numeracy skills to the same high standards in other subjects.

In the foundation phase, many pupils use a range of information and communication technology (ICT) devices appropriately to support their learning. For example, they practice number skills, locate information about minibeasts online and scan quick response codes successfully. Across key stage 2, most pupils are confident and regular users of ICT. They use a range of suitable programs and applications to develop and support their basic skills, for example in reading and spelling and to enhance their work across the curriculum. Pupils share and present their work well. For example, Year 4 create attractive pamphlets to advertise the attractions of Barry and the wider south Wales area using text and graphics. Older pupils input data into spreadsheets, for example in a science experiment about the effects of dropping a ball from different heights, and then create and interpret a line graph of the results. Many pupils use simple coding to create games or to move objects successfully around a screen.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe and know how to remain so in a good range of contexts. For example, in the role of site managers, Year 2 pupils insist that everyone wears helmets while working on their construction site. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils are very clear about online safety.

Throughout the school, most pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. For instance, Year 1 pupils know that eating broccoli, brushing their teeth and doing star jumps is good for their health. The eco committee promotes good attitudes towards sustainability. For example, its 'eco spies' report that a few teachers leave electronic equipment on after use and the eco committee has produced bright red stop signs around the school, which is pricking a few consciences.

Most pupils behave very well during lessons, assemblies, when moving around the school and during break times. They treat adults and visitors with respect and show the values that the school promotes, such as appreciation and care for others, for example hugging friends who are upset. Older pupils are keen to shoulder responsibilities and they carry these out diligently, such as ensuring the smooth running of the playground zones.

Most pupils show positive attitudes towards their work. They are eager to learn and many stick at challenging tasks, such as solving complex financial calculations in Year 6.

Many key stage 2 pupils respond well to the opportunities to have their say in the life of the school. They share their ideas and offer suggestions to improve aspects, for example moving the music zone away from the quiet area of the playground. A few older pupils help senior leaders to evaluate the quality of learning in different classes. These pupils observe first-hand and reflect on the importance of good attitudes to learning. For example, they recognise how poor behaviour can disrupt other pupils' learning experiences.

A few pupil groups are beginning to improve life in the school and the wider community. For instance, members of the 'Values Council' have approached parents and others to contribute food to support those in need and the school now hosts a food bank, the first school in the area to do this.

Pupils' attendance rates are consistently lower than those in similar schools over recent years. However, most pupils are responding well to a range of recent changes, such as rewards, earlier morning start times and immediate phone calls to parents, to improve punctuality and attendance.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The school provides a broad and engaging curriculum for all its pupils. In the foundation phase, most learning experiences are of a very high quality. Pupils immerse themselves in a wide range of interesting opportunities that stem from their current topic and cover enhanced and continuous provision as well as focused tasks. Staff give careful thought to how pupils can access both indoor and outdoor learning independently and enable them, consequently, to give full reign to their imaginations. For example, pupils carry on animated conversations with imaginary friends on a mobile phone. In key stage 2, pupils study a suitable series of topics that capture the interest of nearly all. Provision ensures that, in upper key stage 2 particularly, pupils develop good inquiry skills and access the full range of opportunities provided as confident and independent learners.

Staff supplement the curriculum well with a wide range of visits and visitors that link closely to current topics and enhance pupils' experiences effectively. An extensive number of extra-curricular activities support and extend learning opportunities, for example through sports, creative and scientific experiences. Provision to develop pupils' understanding of Welsh language, heritage and culture is effective. For instance, work with Welsh writers such as Kate Williams in Year 2, to create mini beast poems, and visits to places such as Llancaich Fawr, Cardiff Castle and the military museum at Brecon raise pupils' awareness suitably.

In both key stages, teachers plan well to develop pupils' literacy and ICT skills systematically through interesting applications in a wide range of work across the curriculum. Planning for numeracy skills is less consistent.

The overall quality of teaching is good with elements of excellent practice in both key stages. In the many classes where teaching is good or better, nearly all pupils, including those with challenging behaviour, display impressive levels of motivation. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and set them stimulating tasks that they often differentiate appropriately for most pupils. However, tasks set in a minority of key stage 2 classes are often too difficult to allow pupils with additional learning needs to succeed. Most lessons have clear learning objectives that teachers share with pupils and most teachers use questioning well to develop pupils' thinking and to consolidate and extend their learning. In the foundation phase and upper key stage 2, learning moves at a good pace and there are suitable opportunities for pupils to work independently and to co-operate in pairs and groups. In all classes, strong working relationships between teachers, learning support assistants and pupils enable staff to manage pupils' behaviour well. Teachers deploy most learning support assistants effectively to work purposefully with targeted pupils in lessons and in withdrawal groups.

In the foundation phase, although pupils have literacy and numeracy targets, teachers do not always frame these in simple enough language for pupils to understand. However, the overall quality of oral and written feedback from teachers is good and supports pupils' learning well, giving them a clear idea of what they need to do to improve. Across key stage 2, most pupils have appropriate individual targets, which they find helpful tools to improve their work. Teachers' marking often encourages pupils to extend and amend their work successfully with green pens, working walls and self-assessment against suitable success criteria, but this good practice is not consistent enough in all classes.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Staff know pupils very well and employ a wide range of very effective strategies to meet their needs. Leaders analyse a wide range of data regularly to identify pupils in need of additional support, particularly regarding their wellbeing. Leaders also ensure that they are visible and accessible at the start of school. This allows parents and senior leaders to speak informally as children arrive at school, rather than making a formal appointment to meet. Often, this prompt and timely action is helpful in addressing any concerns quickly, before they escalate.

The school provides a nurture breakfast in the 'Cwtch' to ensure that vulnerable pupils feel happy and safe before joining class and this extends to any pupil who is unhappy at the start of the day. Staff in the 'Cwtch' provide outstanding nurture provision, which has a significant positive impact on improving pupils' wellbeing. For example, a comprehensive pupil support programme allows highly vulnerable pupils to share their concerns and feelings in a very safe, secure and comfortable environment. The school assesses the progress of pupils using the 'Cwtch' regularly and staff continue to monitor pupils who no longer need such intensive support on return to class. The 'Cwtch' is highly effective in reducing instances of inappropriate or aggressive behaviour in mainstream classes and around the school.

Arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

There is a wide range of effective interventions to support improving pupils' basic skills. These enable targeted pupils to make good progress in improving their skills in literacy. Leaders forge strong links with specialist support agencies, which are highly effective in supporting pupils with complex additional learning needs, such as visual impairment.

The school shares individual education plans regularly with parents and pupils. However, pupils' targets in these plans are often too broad. They are not specific enough to enable staff to measure small steps of progress effectively in classes.

The school provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop values such as tolerance and respect. Staff model spiritual and moral values effectively. For example, both the wellbeing leader and pupils were awe struck during an assembly that featured a baby hearing for the first time and a young girl performing ballet in a wheelchair.

There are appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking and for pupils to participate in a wide range of physical activities. For instance, many extra-curricular sporting and dance clubs are available to pupils across the school.

The school gives pupils many beneficial opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Pupils' suggestions have improved break times through the introduction of a highly effective zone system, where older pupils act as 'Zone Managers' to ensure more enjoyable playtimes for all.

There is a worthwhile partnership with a local residential home, where younger pupils and their parents enjoy reading regularly with residents. This helps to strengthen links with parents and the partnership with the local community.

Recent changes to promote good attendance are popular with pupils but it is too early to assess the difference they are making to overall rates.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher's vision for the school focuses firmly on achieving the best possible outcomes for each individual pupil. She shares this vision successfully with parents, pupils, staff and governors. The re-organised leadership structure is effective in ensuring that roles are shared among staff and it provides sufficient leadership and management capacity for the size of the school. Senior leaders are strong, professional role models, who have high expectations of pupils, teachers and learning support assistants. As a result, staff morale is high and the school is a happy and successful learning community.

Together, leaders monitor the provision well. They identify accurately where there are strengths, and where the provision requires improvement. Their processes for monitoring and evaluation make good use of a wide range of first-hand evidence, including regular lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work, and seeking the views of pupils, parents and governors. The school self-evaluation document is an honest and accurate appraisal of the provision and pupil outcomes. The resultant improvement plan targets are generally manageable and achievable, although

leaders do not always link priorities at a strategic level, for example nurture and attendance. Success criteria are often measurable, but in a few instances they do not ensure that actions focus sharply enough on bringing about improvement, for example in spelling.

The school is a successful, proactive learning community where nearly all staff are reflective practitioners, who seek to improve their own practice. Leaders address any underperformance robustly through well-focused support and helpful feedback and challenge. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved and there are pockets of highly effective practice.

There are worthwhile opportunities for all staff to participate in a wealth of professional learning activities to improve aspects of pupils' wellbeing. For instance, leaders visit other schools regularly to reflect on the provision at Gladstone and, as a result, they have made purposeful changes to how pupils start their school day.

Leaders make efficient use of the school's limited resources, for example in providing safe and engaging school grounds and maintaining the old Victorian building. They ensure that there are sufficient, well-qualified staff to support pupils' wellbeing and academic development. However, a few resources are outdated and tired, such as the story and information books in classroom reading areas.

The governors understand and discharge their responsibilities well and fulfil their role as critical friends effectively. A particular strength is the buddy system, which pairs experienced governors with those new to the role. Members of the governing body visit the school to assure for themselves the quality of the school's self-evaluation and to evaluate progress against the improvement priorities. Governors not only provide valuable support for the school's leaders, but also worthwhile challenge and a fresh perspective. For example, they challenge leaders to improve ICT provision and to narrow the attainment gap of pupils eligible for free school meals.

All staff share leaders' passion to maintain high standards of pupils' wellbeing, in particular. They provide plentiful opportunities to ensure effective support for any pupils who may be vulnerable to underachievement. For example, the school uses the pupil development grant very effectively to provide the valuable 'cwttch' nurture provision.

Copies of the report

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

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses 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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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