



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

A report on

**Glyncoed Primary School
Badminton Grove
Ebbw Vale
Blaenau Gwent
NP23 5UL**

Date of inspection: November 2017

by

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

About Glyncoed Primary School

Glyncoed Primary School is a community primary school in the Glyncoed area of Ebbw Vale, in Blaenau Gwent. There are 338 pupils on roll aged 3 to 11, including 41 part-time pupils in the nursery class. There are 10 single-age classes and three mixed-aged classes, taught by 13 full-time teachers and one part-time teacher.

The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 15%, which is below the national average of 19%. The school identifies about 16% of pupils as having additional learning needs, but very few have a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils are of white British ethnicity and very few speak Welsh at home.

The school's last inspection was in June 2011. The headteacher took up her post in January 2013.

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

During their time at the school, most pupils make good progress from their starting points. They participate very enthusiastically in their learning, express their ideas clearly and discuss their work confidently to visitors. The positive interaction and collaboration amongst pupils is a strength of the school.

Teachers provide interesting experiences that engage most pupils' interest effectively. Staff work well together collaboratively to ensure a caring ethos and positive wellbeing for pupils.

Leaders set high expectations and a clear strategic vision for the school. They use the information from self-evaluation processes effectively to identify sensible improvement priorities.

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 Challenge more able pupils to achieve their potential
- R2 Ensure effective provision to develop pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills in key stage 2
- R3 Provide opportunities for pupils to make decisions about how and what they learn

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Many pupils enter the school with literacy and numeracy skills that are below those expected for their age. Over time, most pupils make good progress as they move through the school and many achieve the level expected by the end of key stage 2. Pupils who have additional learning needs make good progress against their personal targets. However, more able pupils do not achieve well at the higher levels across the school.

In all year groups, most pupils participate enthusiastically in their learning and listen attentively to staff and each other. They express their ideas clearly and discuss their work confidently with visitors. In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in reading. Many older foundation phase pupils read with fluency and expression. They apply their skills successfully across the curriculum, for example when researching information about characters from a storybook. In key stage 2, most pupils read at the level expected for their age. They discuss appropriate texts by different authors and predict sensibly, what might happen next. Many extract information successfully to support their learning, for example when researching information about the Olympic games.

Many foundation phase pupils write stories and accounts effectively, for example when retelling a fairy tale in their own words. They use their imagination well, for instance to create questions about superheroes. Many write confidently for a range of purposes, in indoor and outdoor activities. In key stage 2, pupils' writing skills develop well across a wide range of genres and their writing engages the reader effectively. For example, they write interesting diary entries for an inanimate object based on the novel 'Rose Blanche'. Most pupils use basic punctuation well to organise their writing and many older pupils draft and refine their work successfully to improve its quality. Across the school, pupils use the writing skills they acquire in English to good effect in other areas of learning.

Most pupils' numeracy skills are developing effectively across the school. In the foundation phase, many pupils make good progress in their mathematical development across areas of learning. Many pupils handle money correctly and are confident when using number squares. Many apply their skills successfully when solving problems, for example about the heights of Year 2 pupils in the class. They enjoy the problem solving activities that they work through in different areas inside and outside the classroom. However, the more able could have challenging activities. In key stage 2, many pupils use various number strategies successfully in order to calculate problems. Most apply their measure and data handling skills effectively. In general, most older pupils in key stage 2 transfer their numeracy skills well to other curriculum areas, particularly in their science lessons, for example when investigating whether a person's height affects their lung capacity. A few older, more able pupils tackle complex problems and investigations independently, for example when analysing parts and wholes of large numbers.

The majority of pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good across the school. In the foundation phase, many pupils use word-processing

and simple paint programmes to create pictures and to add text, changing the colours and font size with growing independence. Many older foundation phase pupils give clear instructions to a programme to make an object move and follow a route. Nearly all key stage 2 pupils understand e-safety well. Most pupils search for information online competently and use a range of programmes confidently to present their findings. They use an online software platform successfully to enrich learning experiences across the school. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of databases, coding and modelling is limited.

Across the school, a majority of pupils make positive progress in developing their Welsh language skills. By Year 2, many use familiar words and phrases confidently and respond well to instructions from staff during lessons. Many pupils in key stage 2 speak appropriately and have good pronunciation, for example when describing themselves, their favourite foods and their hobbies. A few older pupils read texts fluently and with expression. As they move through the school, many pupils write in Welsh at an appropriate level.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe, well cared for and valued. They understand how to stay safe in a good range of contexts, for example when using the internet. They are confident that adults and other pupils will help them if they have a problem.

Most pupils respond well to the wide range of opportunities the school provides for them to participate in activities to enhance their health and wellbeing. For example, pupils take part in the Blaenau Gwent cross-country festival achieving success competitively and receiving praise for their excellent sporting behaviour. Most pupils make a range of appropriate healthy lifestyle choices, including eating and drinking healthy and taking regular exercise.

Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, caring and tolerant of others' needs, demonstrating high levels of respect towards everyone in school. The positive interaction and collaboration amongst pupils is a strength of the school.

In all year groups, pupils offer their opinions confidently and consider the views of others. For example, candidates for the school council produce an anonymous manifesto, which pupils consider appropriately prior to voting. The pupil led school council meet regularly and successfully influence the life of the school, for example by designing and planning the use of an adventure trail within the school grounds.

Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and appreciate the range of opportunities on offer. Older key stage 2 pupils have specific responsibilities, for example as head boy and girl, house captains, playground buddies and digital leaders. These responsibilities develop pupils' social and life skills very well.

Nearly all pupils enjoy their learning and are enthusiastic in lessons and group work. Most concentrate well and stay on task for appropriate lengths of time. Pupils are eager to share their learning experiences and talk extensively about their work. Many pupils are developing good strategies to increase their independence and they recognise the importance of hard work. However, pupils' ability to plan and lead their own learning is limited.

Attendance rates over the past three years have improved. However, the school remains in the lower 50% when compared to similar schools. Most pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly and arrive at school punctually.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching in the school is good. All teachers plan their lessons collaboratively and carefully. They take very good account of their pupils' interests. As a result, most lessons include a good range of stimulating and often exciting activities, which motivate most pupils well and support them to make good progress in their learning.

Teachers and other adults know their pupils well. All teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and they manage this calmly and effectively. They recognise and reward hard work. In nearly all classes, teachers make sure that pupils understand what they need to do to learn successfully. They question pupils skilfully to check on their progress and to challenge them to think more deeply. However, the school does not yet provide suitable opportunities during whole class teaching sessions to maximise the progress of more able pupils.

Most teachers include pupils well in judging what they have achieved in a session and in identifying how they could improve their work or their understanding. This process begins in the foundation phase and becomes more sophisticated as pupils move through the school. Teachers mark and assess pupils' work regularly and accurately. They make good use of their assessments and observations to adapt future lessons and to feed into the tracking of pupils' progress. All teachers set well-considered weekly homework tasks that challenge and enthuse pupils. Teachers in the foundation phase use support staff particularly effectively to lead small group activities both within the classroom and in the recently improved outdoor learning areas. Teachers plan carefully the imaginative use of these areas to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and creative skills. Across the foundation phase, teachers plan and provide a good balance between adult led and child initiated learning within the stimulating and well-resourced environment.

Across the school, teachers plan systematically for pupils to develop their oracy, reading, writing and numeracy skills. In addition, pupils have interesting opportunities to use and apply these skills in their topic work, for example, older key stage 2 pupils learn about the human digestive system and particularly enjoy writing a diary of the journey of a jam sandwich through the body. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills across the curriculum, particularly the use of coding, modelling and databases in key stage 2, are less well developed.

The school's curriculum provides a wide range of valuable experiences for pupils, which enhance their learning. For example, older key stage 2 pupils stay at a local outdoor education centre where they develop their independent learning skills. Regular Welsh lessons across the school help pupils of all ages to understand the importance of learning Welsh. There are frequent opportunities to hear and respond in Welsh informally around the school. Teachers plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to visit places of interest around Wales linked to their topic work such as Caerphilly Castle and Dan yr Ogof Caves.

Care, support and guidance: Good

All teachers collect information about pupils' strengths and areas for development carefully. They make good use of this information to identify and provide appropriate support for specific groups of pupils, including those with additional learning needs. The school provides a wide range of effective programmes to support identified pupils to develop their basic skills. Well-trained staff plan and deliver these programmes successfully. Pupils with individual education plans make good progress in relation to their abilities and the targets in their plans.

There are effective systems for tracking pupils' progress as they journey through the school. Informative and individualised annual reports give parents an accurate picture of their child's progress and include specific targets for improvement.

The school supports pupils with emotional needs well and is successful in improving behaviour. There is a good range of opportunities for parents to learn how to support their children's wellbeing. For example, the school consulted successfully with parents and pupils over a revised curriculum for the promotion of positive attitudes to sex and relationships education.

There are good opportunities for pupils to learn how to be healthy, for example by selling and buying fruit and vegetables at playtime. The curriculum provides worthwhile activities for pupils to participate in sports, such as gymnastics and swimming. A suitable range of after-school clubs promote pupils' health and fitness well.

The school encourages pupil participation through beneficial pupil voice forums, such as the school council. The council decided recently to introduce alternative treats to birthday cakes, for example 'the best seat in the house' in the classroom. However, opportunities for pupils to direct their own learning are limited. The school provides pupils with appropriate opportunities to be active in the local community. For example, the school choir performs at local venues and pupils improve the local environment through litter picking.

There is a range of useful partnerships with outside agencies, which help pupils make good choices about their personal safety and that of others. For example, the school's police liaison officer delivers lessons about staying safe online and supports the school when dealing with any incidents of cyber bullying. The school liaises with external agencies and specialist services for guidance and training to ensure that all staff have the skills necessary to support identified pupils suitably. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

There are suitable curriculum plans for personal, social and religious education, which help to develop pupils' understanding of diversity and the wider world. The school provides a variety of appropriate learning experiences to help pupils engage with the creative arts and cultural activities, for example through participating in the school choir, weekly music lessons and in end of term whole-school productions.

Acts of worship are appropriate and meet requirements. These reinforce the positive ethos of the school and help to celebrate its life and work.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher sets a clear strategic direction for developing the school. The senior leadership team support the headteacher well and all leaders have high expectations and communicate their vision clearly to the school community. The headteacher distributes responsibilities effectively. All staff work together collaboratively to ensure a caring ethos and positive wellbeing for pupils.

Leaders have a sound understanding of strengths and areas for improvement within the school. They undertake thorough monitoring activities that help them to evaluate the quality of the school's work accurately. Leaders use the information from self-evaluation processes, such as book scrutiny, lesson observation and data analysis, to identify appropriate improvement priorities. They communicate these well to staff, parents and governors and they co-ordinate the work of addressing key priorities for improvement effectively. All members of staff are aware of their responsibilities and their contribution towards achieving the priorities for improvement, for example developing pupil wellbeing and increasing the number of pupils achieving the higher than expected outcomes and levels. Senior leaders have a good picture of how well the school meets the needs of its pupils.

The improvement plan's priorities link closely to the outcomes of the self-evaluation process and focus firmly on maintaining and raising standards. Leaders monitor carefully to keep progress against these priorities under review. Teachers and senior leaders meet regularly to discuss school improvement priorities. Performance management procedures for teachers and teaching assistants support school improvement suitably. There are useful opportunities for staff to attend courses and receive in-house training. For example, a whole school mathematics initiative is effective in improving standards in mathematical reasoning across the school.

Through a clear staffing structure, teams of teachers work within effective learning communities. This distributive leadership has a positive effect on improving pupils' standards and wellbeing and strengthening provision. As a result, there is now more consistency in marking and assessment in the foundation phase. Younger key stage 2 pupils have more opportunities to use the outdoor environment for their learning.

Leaders and staff work successfully with other schools within the cluster. For example, the work with the high school to develop mathematics for older more able key stage 2 pupils is enhancing the school's capacity to bring about improvement.

Members of the governing body have a thorough knowledge of the school's performance that enables them to support and hold the school to account for its performance successfully. Sub-committees make a valuable contribution to the strategic direction of the school by undertaking regular activities. For example, working with leaders and school staff on structured learning walks, the moderation of science books and speaking to pupils help to provide governors with a clear overview of the work of the school.

Leaders manage and deploy resources well. Support staff are effective members of the team and contribute well to improving pupils' standards, wellbeing and social skills. Pupils in the foundation phase benefit from a fantasy world, mud kitchen and construction and numeracy areas that all contribute to a high quality outdoor learning environment.

Leaders ensure purposeful use of the school budget to improve provision and standards. Expenditure links closely to the school improvement plan priorities. Leaders use the pupil development grant purposefully to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and wellbeing skills.

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:

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