



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

A report on

**Gowerton Primary School
The Elba Sport Complex
Ffordd Beck
Gowerton
Swansea
SA4 3GE**

Date of inspection: September 2017

by

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

About Gowerton Primary School

Gowerton Primary School is in the village of Gowerton, just outside Swansea.

There are 400 pupils on roll, including 48 part-time nursery pupils in 14 single-age classes and one mixed age class. The school opened in September 2010, following the amalgamation of the separate Tregwyr Infants and Junior Schools. In January 2016, the school moved to a new purpose built building.

Around 16% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is lower than the Wales average of 19%. The school states that around 27% of pupils are on the additional learning needs register, which is slightly higher than the Wales average of 21%. A very few pupils have a statement of special education needs. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home or have English as an additional language.

The headteacher took up her post in September 2010. Estyn last inspected the school in February 2012.

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

Pupils at Gowerton Primary School enjoy the imaginative learning experiences planned by their teachers and make good progress as they move through the school. The quality of teaching is consistently good across the school. The vibrant foundation phase is a particular strength. It provides pupils with comprehensive skills to make the most of the following stages of their education. Pupils receive good levels of care, support and guidance, which ensure that nearly all pupils are confident and have high levels of wellbeing. Senior leaders have a clear vision for school improvement and share this effectively with all staff. There is a strong sense of teamwork and all staff and the governing body work well together to ensuring good quality education for pupils.

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 Improve key stage 2 pupils' ability to apply their numeracy skills meaningfully in work across the curriculum
- R2 Provide opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to contribute to what and how they learn
- R3 Improve the use of performance information at a strategic level to support school improvement

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, most pupils start with skills that correspond to those expected for their age. They make strong progress in literacy and numeracy as they move through the school. Many pupils make very good progress in the foundation phase and pupils with additional learning needs make strong progress towards their targets from their starting points.

In the foundation phase, almost all pupils develop new vocabulary quickly and learn to communicate with clarity and confidence. They listen attentively to one another and respond well to questions and challenges both in English and Welsh. For example, Year 1 pupils respond appropriately to questions in Welsh from the class when in the 'hot seat' as a dinosaur. In key stage 2, most pupils develop a sophisticated vocabulary in English that they use in a wide variety of purposeful contexts. For example, Year 4 pupils give clear technical explanations of igneous rocks. However, in Welsh, progress in oracy is not as consistent. Whilst a majority of pupils develop sentence structures well, a few are unable to extend their answers to engage in conversations about everyday activities and interests.

Most pupils' reading skills develop well. Most pupils in the foundation phase develop a good understanding of phonics quickly. They use their rapidly developing reading skills to enhance their learning in a wide variety of contexts. For example, Year 2 pupils refer to the written version of the 'Red and the White Dragon' story to inform their re-enactment of the event. Most pupils continue this strong progress in key stage 2. By Year 6, many pupils read well for a wide variety of purposes. They have a sophisticated understanding of an author's portrayal of character and the structure of different genres. For example, Year 6 pupils discuss knowledgeably the differences in style between a narrative author who is part of the plot, a diarist and a 'third person' author. Most pupils also read basic Welsh texts competently and confidently.

Most pupils progress well in writing as they move through school. Progress in the foundation phase is particularly strong. By the start of Year 2, pupils write at length using imaginative vocabulary. For example, Year 2 pupils identify and use similes such as, 'as sharp as knives' to describe a dragon's claw. Most pupils make good progress through key stage 2. They write well in Welsh in a good range of different contexts using appropriate sentence structures. For example, Year 4 pupils write accurate descriptions of a Celtic warrior. Most pupils have a very good understanding of the features of different genres and use their writing purposefully across the breadth of the curriculum. For example, Year 5 pupils write very effective diary entries using emotive vocabulary in the role of a child in the Blitz. Many more able pupils write extensively using grammar and vocabulary effectively.

Most pupils make rapid progress in numeracy as they move through the foundation phase. They apply these skills in a wide variety of purposeful activities. For example, pupils in the nursery discover how many children like porridge in response to the story of Goldilocks. Most pupils continue to make good progress in key stage 2, particularly in their ability to solve problems using their well-developed

understanding of number. However, they do not apply their skills meaningfully and sufficiently in subjects other than mathematics.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are effective. Throughout the foundation phase, most pupils use their skills confidently to enhance their learning. For example, in Year 1, pupils create bar charts using an online tool to record how many star jumps their class can do in one minute. In key stage 2, most pupils continue to develop and use these skills well. By Year 6, they use their skills confidently and purposefully in a wide variety of contexts. For instance, pupils regularly email homework to their class teacher. Most pupils across the school develop effective coding skills. For example, pupils in Year 3 use an online programming tool to create a simple game. Nearly all pupils know how to stay safe online.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe, well cared for and valued. They are polite and treat one another with respect and tolerance. Pupils have a strong understanding of their rights and responsibilities as global citizens.

Nearly all pupils are well aware of the need to eat healthily and to exercise. For example, many pupils participate enthusiastically in a national scheme to encourage pupils to cycle to school. Most pupils participate in a wide range of high quality extra-curricular activities. For example, pupils are proud to attend clubs that promote physical activity. Many participate enthusiastically in a folk group where they sing Welsh language songs to a very high standard. Many pupils with additional learning needs participate actively in these clubs and act as representatives on organisations such as the school council, caring crew and eco-council.

Pupils take responsibility for their actions. Most follow agreed class charters and school rules, based on respect, consistently. For example, in the foundation phase pupils take responsibility for their behaviour as they collaborate, learn and play independently.

Most pupils persevere well when undertaking challenging tasks. They have a clear understanding of what to do when the first approach to a challenge is unsuccessful. Pupils work well collaboratively and are successful at supporting one another in their learning. For example, Year 1 pupils demonstrate determination when exploring ways to melt a large block of ice containing a baby dinosaur.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate good behaviour in class and other areas of the school, such as in the "Stryd Dysgu". They have a positive attitude to learning. They move around the school well when changing activities and when leaving assembly. They settle quickly in class and are ready to learn. They engage fully in lessons and most sustain concentration well. This is a strong feature throughout the school.

Pupils develop key attitudes and behaviours successfully that will help them learn through their lives. For example, pupils are active in improving attendance and punctuality. This is beginning to have a positive impact throughout the school.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. All staff have high expectations of pupils' standards and behaviour. They deliver lessons that engage and motivate pupils successfully. For example, pupils in Year 2 enjoy developing their writing skills when imagining how a broken egg in their classroom released a dragon that flew over the school.

Teachers use their assessments of pupils' ability well to plan activities. These tasks challenge nearly all pupils at a level that is suited to their age and ability. As a result, they make good progress during lessons and over time. For example, in many classes, teachers set 'chilli challenges' during mathematics lessons that allow pupils to choose from a range of tasks at varying levels. This encourages pupils to reflect on their own learning and push themselves to develop their skills to a higher level.

Feedback from teachers provides pupils with clear guidance on what they do well and how to improve their work further. Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to assess their own progress and that of their peers. For example, the 'what I am looking for toolkit' allows pupils to work with their peers and teachers to reflect on the quality of their learning successfully.

Teachers deploy highly effective teaching assistants well to support pupils' learning. In all classes, teachers make beneficial use of their outdoor space to engage pupils and extend their learning. For example, pupils in Year 4 develop their understanding of place value successfully when chalking calculations on the floor of their outdoor area and representing numbers with acorns and pinecones.

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils throughout the school well. The vibrant foundation phase curriculum is particularly effective. It provides a rich variety of challenging, well-structured learning activities that interest and enthuse the pupils. Planning in the foundation phase uses the outdoor environment very effectively to challenge the more able and to meet the needs of pupils with additional learning needs. The curriculum balances the systematic development of core skills with exciting opportunities to use them. It allows pupils to become ambitious, curious and confident, developing their thinking skills well.

In key stage 2, the exciting and motivating curriculum continues through topics such as 'The Blitz' and the 'Industrial Revolution'. Almost all pupils respond very well to these engaging learning experiences. The school uses visits and visitors very effectively to inspire pupils. For example, a memorable re-enactment of life in the Blitz stimulated pupils' writing in Year 5. However, the school plans only limited opportunities for pupils to decide what and how they learn. The forest school provision is an exception to this. All pupils have access to this excellent facility for six weeks in the year. Planning for this aspect of the curriculum is sophisticated and allows pupils to explore, challenge themselves, direct their learning, apply skills and grow in confidence at a fast pace. For example, Year 4 pupils constructed their own miniature Celtic roundhouse. This allowed them to collaborate and apply previously learnt skills in a challenging but secure environment. The forest school initiative is a powerful example of the way the school takes carefully considered risks to promote the best possible learning experiences for the pupils.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a safe, happy and caring community that nurtures pupils' personal, social, spiritual, moral and cultural skills well. There is a strong ethos of trust and teamwork. Whole school assemblies and the attractive displays in the school promote values of respect, co-operation and tolerance well. For example, staff use the butterflies of mindfulness display in the hall imaginatively as a focus for reflection during assemblies.

Staff provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of eating and drinking healthily. They promote the importance of taking regular exercise well, such as through running the 'daily mile', and provide a wide range of high quality extra-curricular sporting activities. They take good advantage of the close proximity of community sports facilities.

The school ensures a variety of rich learning experiences to help pupils engage with the creative arts and with cultural activities. For example, worthwhile visits to the heritage centre and small group drama activities enrich pupils' learning experiences.

The additional learning needs co-ordinator works very effectively to ensure that provision for pupils who need additional support is strong. These pupils make good progress towards their individual goals as a result. Well-trained staff plan and deliver effective support in classes and through withdrawal groups. For example, the use of 'owl diaries' ensures that pupils with additional learning needs, staff and parents understand how well pupils are progressing and what their next learning goals are. Good use is made of a range of specialist external agencies to support pupils' speech and language skills. High quality learning plans meet the needs of individual pupils successfully.

There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. For example, pupils' participation in the school council, eco committee and their work as digital leaders develop pupils' leadership skills well. Pupils are involved purposefully in school improvement planning. For example, they identify ways to improve their learning in science by suggesting the formation of an after school science club.

Informative and personalised annual reports give parents an accurate picture of their child's progress and include specific targets for improvement. The school communicates effectively with parents. For example, it uses social media well to keep parents informed about the day-to-day activities of pupils.

The schools' arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher and senior leadership team have a clear vision for the school based on continual improvement. They model these values well to all members of staff and create an ethos where everyone is committed to raising standards. Teamwork is a strong feature of the school. Senior leaders have managed the move from three separate sites to the new building successfully. They work efficiently to ensure the consistency of good quality provision across the school.

All members of staff are clear about their roles and carry out their responsibilities effectively. Senior leaders organise staff into curriculum teams that support the school's ongoing monitoring of teaching and learning well. For example, staff work in their teams to undertake 'book looks' to gauge the standards achieved by pupils and monitor the success of new initiatives. The outcome of these activities informs the school's self-evaluation report and improvement plans clearly. This frequently results in better outcomes for pupils, such as with the improved quality of extended writing across the school.

The school is developing a successful track record of improvement. For example, through looking at pupils' work and listening to the views of pupils, senior leaders identified a need to improve the quality of boys' writing. As a result, the school reviewed its curriculum to ensure its provision of topics successfully engages and motivates boys. Their good standard of writing is now comparable to that of girls.

The school gauges the opinion of a wide range of stakeholders as part of its self-evaluation processes. This includes the views of parents, pupils, staff and governors. Senior leaders' use of performance information to inform school improvement is extensive. However, they do not always use this effectively either at a strategic level to focus the school's work, or to identify measurable targets to evaluate the success of their action plans.

Senior leaders provide valuable professional development opportunities for all staff that support the school's improvement planning effectively. These include attendance at courses, sharing of good practice within the school and the delivery of in-house training. The school's involvement in networks of professional practice with other schools is a strong feature that results in improved outcomes for pupils. For example, the deputy headteacher leads a group of foundation phase teachers from schools across Swansea to look at good practice in outdoor learning. This is improving the quality of outdoor experiences for pupils in the foundation phase and lower key stage 2 and is having a positive impact on skills development, particularly for boys.

The role of the governing body is well developed. They gather first hand evidence regularly on the work of the school. As a result of their scrutiny of pupils' work, good links with staff and informative reports from the headteacher, governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They provide appropriate levels of challenge to senior leaders and frequently request further information and clarification when needed, for example when asking for further evidence of pupils' extended writing following a scrutiny of their work.

School resources are plentiful and meet the needs of pupils and the priorities of the school's improvement plan well. Senior leaders and governors collaborate efficiently to manage the school's budget, staff and accommodation efficiently. The new building provides a stimulating learning environment for pupils. The school uses this well designed facility to engage pupils and meet their learning needs effectively. The recent purchase of laptop computers is having a beneficial impact on pupils' standards in ICT.

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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