



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

**A report on**

**Glais Primary School**

**School Road  
Glais  
Swansea  
SA7 9EY**

**Date of inspection: January 2023**

**by**

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

## About Glais Primary School

Name of provider	Glais Primary School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	118
Pupils of statutory school age	87
Number in nursery classes	17
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 23.0%)	*
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 16.1%)	19.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	5.7%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	17/11/2014
Start date of inspection	30/01/2023
An interim headteacher has been in post at the school since October 2022	

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection. Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: [mylocalschool.gov.wales](https://mylocalschool.gov.wales)

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

## Overview

Glais Primary School is a warm and welcoming school with a family feel and where staff know the pupils well and strive to meet their needs. There is a clear focus on promoting pupils' well-being. This helps to make pupils confident learners who are keen to have a go at new things and to take on leadership roles willingly as they move through the school. Pupils are caring towards each other. Older pupils give their time to younger pupils and run clubs and activities that interest them. Pupils have a powerful voice in the school and influence what and how they would like to learn as well as aspects of the school's day-to-day organisation.

Most pupils make strong progress in their learning, particularly in developing their speaking and listening skills in English and mathematical and problem-solving skills. Teachers have made very good progress in designing and implementing a new curriculum in line with the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales, but a few aspects, such as ensuring that staff make pupils aware of online safety measures regularly, are currently not in place. Lessons are interesting and fun, but activities do not provide all pupils with the right level of challenge or support consistently.

Despite a period of instability, and a breakdown in a few key working relationships, leaders and staff have continued to make good progress towards national priorities, such as developing a curriculum and raising the importance of reading across the school. Leaders and teachers monitor the school's work robustly, but their monitoring does not always focus well enough on the impact of the provision on the progress that pupils make. The recently introduced opportunities for parents to share their opinions and to see their children at work on a normal school day have helped them to gain a clearer understanding of the school's work and how to support their child at home.

## Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that there are strong and collaborative working relationships between, staff, governors and parents
- R2 Sharpen monitoring activities and improvement planning so that they focus effectively on the progress that pupils make
- R3 Ensure that teachers provide an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils
- R4 Ensure that personal and social education is embedded across the curriculum so that important aspects, such as online safety, are taught consistently

## What happens next

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

## Main evaluation

### Learning

As they move through the school, most pupils make effective progress in improving their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills from their individual starting points. Most with additional learning needs (ALN) make good progress against their targets.

Across the school, most pupils make strong progress in developing their oracy skills effectively in different contexts. Most are confident, articulate speakers who listen well to adults and other pupils. They speak enthusiastically, using a wide range of age-appropriate vocabulary, and respond well to others during discussions. For example, when collaborating to plan a new whole school theme, pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 express and justify their views about what they would like to learn clearly.

Most pupils read appropriately for their stage of development and many older pupils are competent readers. Most of the youngest pupils are beginning to recognise the form and sound of letters and words well and their reading skills are developing effectively. In reception, pupils are beginning to use their phonetic knowledge to read new words successfully. As they progress through the school, many older pupils read with improved accuracy, expression and understanding, using a range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. Nearly all pupils use their reading skills for a variety of purposes. They know the features of and can comprehend a wide range of genres. An enjoyment of reading is very apparent amongst most pupils. For example, the youngest pupils independently select books to take home for pleasure. Older pupils complete various reading challenges successfully and, as a result, have widened their overall reading experiences.

Most pupils' early writing skills are developing well. Most of the youngest pupils make marks purposefully both inside and outside the classroom and begin to form letters and write simple words. As they move through the school, most pupils' writing develops successfully, and they write for a range of audiences and for different purposes. In many cases, pupils use a good range of punctuation and spell more complex words accurately. However, presentation and handwriting style is an area for development for a minority of pupils. Older pupils respond very well to comments by the teacher and their peers to redraft and improve their work.

A majority of pupils make appropriate progress and are eager to speak Welsh in formal classroom situations. However, they do not have enough confidence to use the Welsh they have learned in unstructured situations.

Many pupils make strong progress in developing a range of mathematical skills across the school. They apply their number skills consistently in relevant learning activities across the curriculum. For example, reception pupils use number tiles to complete missing numbers on a hopscotch grid and use their knowledge of number to create a two-digit number lower than 20. In Year 1 and 2 pupils sort a group of objects into equal and non-equal groups and identify how many equal groups they can create from a given number. As they progress through the school, pupils use their numeracy skills well when solving problems and in a range of real-life contexts.

For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils interpret and analyse data following school committee elections.

Most pupils develop a wide range of digital skills to support their learning and to help them communicate digitally purposefully. For example, younger pupils are beginning to use basic word processing skills suitably, such as when they type words to match pictures of their favourite pets. Most older pupils display high levels of digital competence. For example, nearly all older pupils can create an excel spreadsheet efficiently to investigate entry costs for a family day out to a castle.

Many pupils are creative thinkers. They have well-developed creative skills, which they use well in a range of activities across the curriculum. For example, younger pupils think carefully about their use of music and dance in an activity where they avoid waking a sleeping dragon, and older pupils consider how to build and reinforce a catapult to fire an object further.

Nearly all pupils' physical skills are developing soundly though a variety of stimulating experiences and activities. Most of the youngest pupils develop their fine motor skills and hand to eye co-ordination successfully, for example whilst using magnetic fishing rods to fish for numbers in the water tray. Most pupils are keen to develop their physical skills through a range of activities as part of their physical education lessons and when working in the forest area. For example, Years 3 and 4 pupils develop good passing and throwing skills when taking part in fun and physically demanding activities to develop their ball handling skills.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Across the school, all pupils feel safe and well cared for. They know what to do if they are worried or anxious and they feel well supported by all staff and their peers. For example, younger pupils develop warm relationships with older pupils who regularly check on their well-being and support them appropriately. As a result, nearly all pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for each other, their school and their community. Whilst a minority of pupils know how to keep themselves safe online, a majority do not always understand the importance of actions such as keeping their passwords private to stay safe. Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of the school rules, and across the school they demonstrate exemplary behaviour. They show a good understanding of fairness and equity, and they show kindness and compassion towards others.

Nearly all pupils enjoy school and demonstrate high levels of participation and engagement in their learning. They enjoy having a voice in the planning of the curriculum and this contributes well to their motivation and thirst for learning. Nearly all pupils at Glais Primary develop as confident learners. They interact well with all adults and their peers and, by the time they reach Year 6, they display high levels of maturity and empathy for others. For example, older pupils chose to raise money for a local homeless charity through their own planned fundraising activities. This helped to raise awareness of those who are less fortunate while enabling pupils to develop their entrepreneurial skills well.

Most pupils know what they need to do to keep healthy. The health and well-being pupil leaders promote healthy eating, drinking and physical activity effectively through

their work across the school. For example, the recent creation of pupil-led lunch time sports clubs for younger pupils helps to promote physical activity well.

Many older pupils enjoy attending the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer, which allow them to develop a variety of skills such as learning sign language, cooking and improving their digital competence. A majority of younger pupils are beginning to benefit from lunchtime clubs provided by Year 6 pupils and they enjoy taking part in an after-school club where they can play board games.

Most pupils are beginning to develop a good awareness of their rights as a child. The recently established Rights Respecting Group helps to promote this important work, for instance through awards in celebration assemblies.

Nearly all pupils collaborate well with their peers and pupils of all ages. They listen carefully to other points of view and, by Year 6, they display high levels of maturity in working together to solve problems and to support pupils who need help. For example, the pupil health and well-being committee provide exceptional emotional and social support to the youngest pupils during lunchtime. They check with them to see if they need help and chat to them. This helps to create a warm, family atmosphere that permeates the school.

Most pupils develop appropriate leadership skills and, by Years 5 and 6, they relish the opportunity to take on increasingly challenging roles, such as lead pupil for the eco-committee, Criw Cymraeg and head boy and girl. These pupils collaborate well and are beginning to discuss and develop ideas in their own school development plan to impact positively on whole school improvement. Nearly all pupils feel that the adults in the school listen to their views and act upon them. This motivates them to further develop their leadership skills and to campaign for further school improvement.

Most older pupils respond well to teachers' marking and verbal feedback. They follow up on teacher suggestions promptly to improve the quality of their work. Most younger pupils respond well to suggestions from adults to trial new approaches during their play.

Following the pandemic, whole-school attendance shows improvement and is line with national averages.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

Staff have collaborated highly effectively to develop a whole-school vision for the curriculum and have carefully considered the learning experiences of pupils. Leaders gathered relevant contextual information about the school community to identify specific areas of focus for the curriculum. They identified that limited diversity in the community might impact on pupils' awareness and experience of the variety of cultures and traditions in a modern multicultural Wales. They have successfully embedded aspects to address this in their curriculum.

Teachers plan whole-school, termly themes purposefully that integrate learning across the curriculum. They introduce the themes through 'launch days' to ignite pupils' interest and help to fire their curiosity and questioning skills. For example, the

whole school visited Carew Castle in Pembrokeshire to launch their 'Land of Legends' theme. Following these launch days, teachers plan purposefully to engage the pupils in their learning through whole-class planning sessions. These projects draw heavily on pupils' suggestions to drive inquiry. Staff make good use of the physical environment around the school as an authentic context for learning. Teachers plan progressively to extend pupils' knowledge, skills and experience from the local environment to the national and world stage when developing their awareness as citizens.

Overall, curriculum leaders ensure that curriculum plans show progression in pupils' skills across the school and the curriculum builds systematically and coherently on pupils' existing knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences. However, this is not always transferred effectively to teachers' individual planning to ensure that they match activities accurately to pupils' abilities. In many cases, pupils receive a suitable level of challenge and support that maximises the progress that they make. However, in a minority of instances across the school, teachers do not match work well enough to pupils' ability and there are not enough opportunities for older pupils to write at length. This slows their rate of progress.

Plans for the development of pupils' personal and social education, including the development of relationships and sexuality education, are at an early stage and not currently embedded across the curriculum.

The school has appropriate arrangements to develop pupils' Welsh language communication skills. Teachers deliver specific language sessions to enhance pupils' oracy skills and a few use a lot of Welsh incidentally throughout the school day. However, planning to develop pupils' use of Welsh in informal situations is at an early stage of development.

Teachers and support staff have warm, positive working relationships with the pupils in their care. They use praise and encouragement appropriately and, as a result, nearly all pupils are motivated to learn.

Teachers act effectively as facilitators of learning. They provide pupils with good opportunities to collaborate and solve problems, such as when older pupils investigate the number of micro-plastics used in clothes or younger pupils solve crossword puzzles linked to their reading book. Teachers and support staff generally ask suitably probing questions and encourage pupils to think and ask their own questions. They intervene at appropriate points, enabling pupils to reflect on their work and to make adjustments where necessary. Support staff provide useful feedback on pupils' responses to the class teacher. This helps the teacher to plan the next steps of learning.

Where teaching is most effective, teachers pause learning to check pupils' understanding or to allow them to share their ideas. They provide useful prompts for pupils to follow, either orally or in writing. In a few cases, the success criteria for writing activities is too challenging and pupils do not understand the task well enough. This negatively affects the pace and quality of their work.

There are suitable systems for teachers to track pupils' progress and to identify those who may need additional support. Any support provided is monitored and evaluated

closely to ensure that pupils fill any gaps in their learning and make suitable progress.

### **Care, support and guidance**

All staff at Glais Primary School place a high priority on ensuring pupils' well-being. The school has a warm and caring ethos. Older pupils enjoy the opportunity to learn how to support others, for example to resolve an argument, and the school has an established system for pupils to communicate any worries or concerns. As a result, nearly all pupils feel happy and safe in school.

The school has implemented the requirements of ALN reform appropriately. Individual development plans are suitable and take appropriate account of pupils' views. Useful one-page profiles present pupils' strengths, interests and needs clearly. Staff use this information well to provide the support that pupils need, for example through small group and individual intervention activities. Across the school, staff provide a wide range of support to meet pupils' social, emotional, and academic needs. They monitor pupils' progress and track the development of individual pupil skills effectively. Termly pupil progress reviews contribute successfully to the process of identifying any pupils who require further support.

Support staff deliver appropriate small group and individual intervention activities. This provides beneficial support to those pupils who need it. They monitor pupils' progress and track the development of individual pupil skills effectively. Termly pupil progress reviews contribute successfully to the process of identifying any pupils who require further support.

Staff liaise well with parents and carers. This supports early intervention and transition arrangements effectively. The recently established parent council provides good opportunities for parents to have a voice on issues that are important to them within the school. The council also provides a useful vehicle to further develop positive relationships with families.

The school plans suitably for the development of pupils' understanding of religion and faiths. Daily acts of worship help to promote moral themes, a love of Wales and the Welsh language and key themes such as Black History. There are useful opportunities to develop pupils' personal and social education through the support of outside providers, such as work with the local police and through work with pupil leadership trainers. These help to develop the leadership skills of older pupils well. However, this work is not currently embedded across the curriculum and important aspects, such as online safety, are not taught consistently across the school.

The school offers all older pupils the opportunity to be involved in a variety of pupil groups ranging from the school's eco-committee to the newly established rights respecting group. Progress understandably stalled during the pandemic, but many of these groups are now beginning to make a difference to the school. For example, the work of the Criw Cymraeg is helping to raise the profile and awareness of Welsh through weekly pupil-led assemblies. The school council and pupil leadership group take a lead role in voicing pupils' opinions and ideas effectively. Their work contributes well to positive change, such as the establishment of lunchtime pupil-led clubs.

The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities including three lunchtime clubs run by Year 6 student leaders who provide sports, Welsh and art activities for younger pupils. These are highly effective and enable older pupils to develop their leadership skills whilst also improving younger pupils' physical skills.

The school provides suitable opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of issues related to equality, diversity and the rights and needs of all. Provision to raise pupils' awareness of Welsh heritage and culture and what it is like to live in modern day Wales is appropriate. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to study Wales in the context of their local area and they ensure that pupils' learning is suitably enriched through visits to places of Welsh historical interest.

All staff and senior leaders monitor pupil attendance carefully. They work in partnership with a range of outside agencies effectively, providing beneficial advice and support to families. The school creates and maintains a safe environment for all pupils, including effective site security and access arrangements. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are appropriate and give no cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management**

Over the past two years, the school has experienced a period of staffing instability. The local authority is supporting the school through a team around the school approach to improve relationships and collaboration. An interim headteacher has been in place since October 2022. This has created stability in the short term. The interim headteacher has created a positive working relationship between staff, governors and parents and continued to provide strong strategic direction to the school's work.

When the substantive headteacher was appointed in September 2020, the school revisited its vision and included staff, pupils, parents and governors appropriately in this process. All staff are committed to ensuring that Glais Primary School is a happy and welcoming place for pupils. Over time, the school's leadership has had a strong focus on pupils' well-being and this can be seen clearly in the vision that has been developed for the school and the culture of safeguarding that exists.

Governors are well informed and have a good understanding of the school and its community. They have recently restarted school visits after the pandemic and provide useful feedback to staff following learning walks. They provide a suitable level of support and challenge to the school in terms of pupils' standards and well-being and have appropriate systems to monitor the school's financial position and to ensure that grants, including the pupil development grant, are spent effectively to improve outcomes for pupils and resources are appropriate for teaching and learning. Governors ensure that there are suitable arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

As this is a small school, staff shoulder a number of additional responsibilities and take on leadership roles linked to national priorities. For example, all staff have worked effectively to develop a bespoke curriculum for the pupils. Each member of teaching staff has taken a lead role in developing aspects of this curriculum. Teachers and support staff are eager to take on additional responsibilities and to develop their practice. For example, they have developed projects that look at and

evaluate the effectiveness of aspects of their practice, such as how pupils develop their well-being through effective outdoor learning and learn times tables most effectively. This is a strong aspect of the school's work.

Leaders and teachers have suitable systems to monitor and evaluate the school's work using first-hand information. However, over time, monitoring activities have tended to focus on compliance with agreed processes as opposed to the progress that pupils make. When planning for improvement, teachers do not always focus well enough on pupils' learning or outcomes. Despite this, the school has a track record of bringing about improvements for pupils, for example in the quality of the way pupils self and peer assess their work, and look for ways to improve.

There are suitable arrangements to manage the performance of staff that link effectively to the school's priorities for improvement. Leaders provide a wide range of appropriate in-house and external professional development opportunities for all staff. Over time, teachers have been involved closely in cluster working with other local schools to develop aspects of teaching and learning and their leadership roles. For example, they looked at how to develop the science and technology aspect of the new curriculum most effectively. The interim headteacher has ensured that staff returning to school after a period of absence receive comprehensive support to make sure that they are aware of recent developments in education and feel confident to carry out their roles.

Staff are eager to foster positive and supportive relationships with families. They keep parents well informed about their child's progress through the use of an app. Recently, they invited parents into school to see classes at work on a normal school day. The feedback from parents about this was extremely positive and provided them with a better understanding of how their children learn.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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