



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all*

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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

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

**Date of inspection: June 2011**

**by**

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



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

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

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

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## Context

Glyncoed Primary School is a community primary school situated in the Glyncoed suburb of Ebbw Vale. It was established as a new school in 2001 after the amalgamation of the infants and junior schools.

The school has 382 pupils aged three to 11 years old, which includes 72 children who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Nearly 60% of pupils come from outside the catchment area. The school has two special needs units, one in each key stage. The number of pupils has increased since the previous inspection.

English is the predominant language spoken at home and around one per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. English is the main language of communication in the school and Welsh is taught as a second language.

Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, with 22% entitled to free school meals, which is near the local authority and all-Wales average of around 20%. Twenty-six per cent of pupils have been identified as having additional learning needs. Twenty pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Glyncoed Primary School is £4,354, which compares with a maximum of £10,493 and a minimum of £3,203 for primary schools in Blaenau Gwent. The school has the sixth highest budget per pupil out of the 28 primary schools in Blaenau Gwent.

The headteacher has been in post since the amalgamation of the schools in 2001 and was previously headteacher of the former junior school since 1990.

The school was previously inspected during the summer term 2005.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The current performance of the provider is good because:

- many pupils make good progress during their time in school;
- pupils generally have good learning experiences;
- the support and guidance provided for pupils is of a high standard; and
- the headteacher and governing body have successfully promoted behaviour and values that have led to a positive school ethos.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospect for improvement is adequate. Although:

- most of the teaching is of good quality; and
- there are effective partnerships which contribute well to raising pupil standards;

at present:

- the school's leadership responsibilities are not distributed enough;
- its formal procedures for self-evaluation are under developed; and
- links between the school development plan and the self-evaluation report are not always clear.

## **Recommendations**

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 raise standards in Welsh language across the school;
- R2 create further opportunities for pupils to work more independently and to use their communication skills across the curriculum, especially in key stage 2;
- R3 ensure that the school's recently introduced tracking system is consistently used to inform daily planning;
- R4 achieve a better balance of roles and responsibilities within the leadership team;  
and
- R5 ensure that the school's self-evaluation processes are more focused on pupil standards.

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### Standards: Good

Most pupils start school with good levels of skills that are appropriate to their age and ability. When analysing the school's end of key stage data, consideration has to be taken of the impact that the results of pupils from the two special units have on that data. Excluding those pupils, results indicate that many make good progress during their time in school. Over the past four years the school has generally performed on the median when compared to similar schools.

Nearly all pupils with additional learning needs achieve well against personal targets and make appropriate progress relative to their ability. Most pupils entitled to free school meals make good progress in line with their ability. There is no significant difference between the results for boys and girls over a four year period.

The verified data on key stage 1 pupils' attainment (including those pupils who attend the special needs unit) in National Curriculum assessment in 2010 indicates that pupils performed at a lower level than the average for the local authority, the family of schools (a group of schools with similar characteristics) and Wales in English, mathematics and science.

At key stage 2, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level in mathematics and science is lower than the average for the authority, the family of schools and Wales. However, the percentage attaining the expected level in English is very near the averages for the family of schools and Wales and higher than the average for the local authority.

This has been the general pattern of performance over the past three years, placing the school amongst the lowest 25% or at least the lower 50% of other similar schools.

In 2010, the school performed well in comparison with other similar schools, the local authority and Wales in the proportion of pupils who achieve level 3 in key stage 1 and level 5 in key stage 2.

Progress in lessons is generally good throughout the school and almost all pupils complete their work well and remain on tasks, showing interest and pride in the presentation of their work.

Nearly all pupils listen intently to instructions, teachers' presentations and their peers' contributions. Almost all pupils communicate confidently with adults and other children in a variety of contexts.

By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils read competently for their age and stage of development and use their reading skills effectively to access other areas of the curriculum. Many pupils' writing skills are underdeveloped due to the over use of writing frames and worksheets.

Pupils' standards in Welsh across the school are weak. Pupils within the Foundation Phase have a few phrases that they regularly use and a limited range of vocabulary relating to areas of topic work. Very little further development takes place throughout key stage 2. The school is beginning to address this through partnership working with the local secondary school. This has not yet had sufficient time to have a positive effect on standards.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Pupils state that they feel safe in school and are well informed about the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle. They are keen to participate in a wide range of sporting activities. All of the pupils from Year 6 have been successful in their first aid training.

Pupils' independent learning skills are not consistently developed. As a result, they are sometimes over dependent on guidance from teachers and are in the early stages of knowing how to improve their own work. However, they keep to tasks well for extended periods and make good use of their time.

Members of the school council represent the views of other pupils effectively. They have established good links with the local community and have been actively engaged in a number of local projects. These include working with elderly members of the community to raise funds for local charities.

Behaviour in class and around the school is very good. Nearly all pupils show respect and concern for others and are courteous and polite to staff and visitors. Pupils' personal, social, spiritual and cultural development is developing effectively.

The school's attendance of around 93% compares favourably with that of other similar schools.

There have been no permanent exclusions over the past eight years. However, there have been seven instances of fixed term exclusions since 2007.

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

All pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

Staff plan a wide variety of interesting experiences that motivate and engage most pupils. The school enriches pupils' learning through the effective use of a wide range of activities, including residential visits and inviting visitors to the school.

The organisation of the Foundation Phase curriculum allows pupils appropriate opportunities to develop their early reading and writing skills across a range of areas of learning throughout the day. In key stage 2, nearly all schemes of work have been reviewed as part of an on-going two year cycle. As a result, there is now progression in planning for subject skills. However, planning for the development of communication, number and information and communication technology across the curriculum is at an early stage of development.

Specific programmes for pupils with additional learning needs are organised successfully.

Provision for the Welsh dimension is good throughout the school. The school has good links with Welsh artists and holds an annual school Eisteddfod. However, the provision for Welsh as a second language is underdeveloped.

The curriculum provides suitable opportunities for all pupils to learn about education for sustainable development and global citizenship through such topics as transport, mini-bugs, and water.

### **Teaching: Good**

Teachers have relevant subject knowledge and the majority have appropriate expectations of pupils. Most plan effectively and share lesson objectives with pupils. The majority of lessons are well paced; however, on occasions teachers' introductions are too long.

Teachers establish very good relationships with pupils that foster positive attitudes to learning. Staff manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. Support staff are clear about their role and what they need to do both in classes and in withdrawal sessions. They contribute well to pupils' learning, particularly within the Foundation Phase and special need units.

In a majority of classes there is a good balance between child-led and teacher directed activities. However, this is not consistent. Teachers sometimes do not use a wide enough range of teaching methods to encourage independent learning.

Overall, assessment procedures are sound. The school has introduced a tracking system to monitor individual pupil progress. However, this system is not yet consistently informing teachers' daily planning. Assessment for Learning is at an early stage of development. Teachers mark work conscientiously and comment positively on pupils' achievements. In the best cases, marking helps pupils to move forward in their learning. Written reports on pupils are clear. Reports to parents are informative and meet statutory requirements. Parents and carers feel well informed about their children's achievements and progress.

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

The school is a caring and supportive community where pupils are respected and valued.

The school has appropriate updated policies and strategies for promoting healthy living and wellbeing.

The school has developed effective working relationships and communicates well with parents and outside agencies including the educational psychologist, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and the local vicar.

Parents and carers receive a good range of information about the life and work of the



school via newsletters, information technology, parents' evenings and an effective open door policy.

There are effective policies to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A whole school approach to positive behaviour management provides all pupils with a good structure to support their moral development. All pupils are involved in making class rules.

Teachers use a range of appropriate support programmes for pupils with additional learning needs. The school uses individual education plans well to ensure that many of these pupils make good progress. Pupils in the special needs units are included successfully in mainstream classes for a range of activities. Staff track the progress of these pupils carefully and review progress with parents regularly. Support for pupils with behaviour difficulties is a strong feature of the school.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school is a fully-inclusive community. It has established an ethos that encourages openness in all relationships. The school actively promotes equal opportunities and all pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision.

The school offers a safe and welcoming environment for all learners. All pupils are encouraged to take a full part in the life of the school.

The school maintains the internal and external accommodation to a high standard, and provides pupils with valuable outdoor learning experiences within the several planting areas that have been created. The school makes very good use of the available space. Very effective outdoor sheltered areas have been created to enhance the provision for Foundation Phase working.

Toilet facilities are appropriate for all pupils.

Resources are of good quality and well matched to pupils' needs.

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

The headteacher and governing body work well together and have a clear vision for the school. The headteacher has successfully promoted behaviours and values that contribute to a positive school ethos where pupils and staff feel valued and secure.

In general, staff have a good understanding of how they contribute to the aims of the school. All members of the senior leadership team have appropriate roles, although leadership responsibilities are not sufficiently distributed. The leadership team do not always have enough allocated time to fulfil their roles.

There are satisfactory performance management systems for teaching staff and these generally have a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations. The governors are very good friends and supporters of the school. Under the leadership of a relatively new chair and vice-chair person, they are becoming more aware of how the school's performance compares with that of similar schools. Governors are informed well about the school's day-to-day activities and the initiatives it is developing. However, they are not involved enough in determining the school's strategic direction or in the processes for self-evaluation.

The school pays suitable attention to national priorities. It has addressed some of the principles of the School Effectiveness Framework, especially in the areas of pupils' wellbeing. The Foundation Phase is well developed. These initiatives are having a positive impact on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

Through regular informal classroom visits and looking at pupils' work, the headteacher knows the school well. However, the school's formal self-evaluation procedures are underdeveloped. They do not involve all members of the senior leadership team or take good enough account of data analysis, direct classroom observations, scrutiny of pupils' work or the views of all pupils. As a result, the school self-evaluation report is a descriptive rather than an evaluative document.

Links between the school development plan and the self-evaluation report are not always clear. However, the latest development plan correctly prioritises raising pupils' standards in mathematics. Funds have been allocated appropriately to this area and end of key stage 2 results for 2011 show that pupils' standards in mathematics have improved. Formal monitoring procedures and the involvement of senior staff in monitoring progress against priorities are not well established.

There are some useful examples of the school beginning to act as a professional learning community. For example, teachers from the special needs classes share current good practice in supporting pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Foundation Phase staff collaborate well, and this has led to improvement in the quality of the learning experiences for the younger pupils. Outside the school the headteacher has established positive relationships with other members of the family of schools. A few teachers have visited these schools to discuss best practice in writing, which has raised awareness of the need to reflect on the teaching methods used in the school.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has very effective partnerships with the local community. Local residents and past members of staff are regular visitors to the school. They make a very good contribution to the curriculum through, for example, working with pupils on activities such as gardening and cookery. The school has strong links with the local church, senior citizens' care home and local businesses.

The partnership with Glamorgan University is a particularly good example of how well governors and staff work with outside organisations to improve pupils' standards. Older pupils are currently working on a joint research project, which compares the advantages and disadvantages of using solar or wind power in the local area. This project has already improved older pupils' knowledge and understanding of renewable energy sources.

The school has valuable partnerships with a range of outside agencies. This includes the music support service that provides high quality strings tuition for pupils in Reception and Year 1.

The school has strong links with the local secondary school. Transition arrangements are very effective. The use of secondary staff to teach Welsh, French and information technology on a fortnightly basis makes a valuable contribution to the education of Year 6 pupils.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school manages its budget effectively with spending decisions appropriately linked to priorities for improvement. The headteacher has accessed a range of available funding sources well in order to improve significantly the school's standards of accommodation.

There are a sufficient number of qualified teachers and support staff and these are deployed effectively. The school generally meets the needs of teaching staff through performance management procedures. However, there are no formal appraisal or performance management systems for support staff.

There are appropriate arrangements for teachers' planning and preparation time. In one class very good use is made of a local theatre company. This provision has a good impact on developing pupils' oral and creative skills through drama activities.

The good partnership with the local secondary school enables a valuable sharing of resources. Older pupils regularly use the secondary school's design technology and information technology facilities. This leads to improved outcomes for pupils.

In view of the good progress made by many pupils, the good standard of care, support and guidance provided, and the appropriate management of the budget, the school overall provides good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

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

One hundred and eleven questionnaires were returned. All parents stated that their children are safe at school and are making good progress. They are all of the opinion that the school helps the children to become more mature and to take on responsibility.

Almost all of the parents agree that the school provides a good range of activities and helps the children settle in well, and that the quality of teaching is good.

Many of the parents feel that the school keeps them well informed about their children's progress, that they understand the school's complaints procedure and feel comfortable about approaching the school when there is a problem.

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

The questionnaire was completed by 160 key stage 2 pupils. Almost all of the pupils are of the opinion that they are happy and feel secure in the school, and that the teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress.

Almost all of the pupils also state that they know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work hard.

A minority of pupils feel that the behaviour of children could be better in class and during play times and that the school does not deal well with bullying.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Glyn Roberts	Reporting Inspector
Liz Miles	Team Inspector
Bernard Harrington	Lay Inspector
Simone Roden	Peer Inspector
Mr C Blatchford (Headteacher)	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

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## Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11