



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

A report on

**Glenboi Primary School
Abercwmboi Isaf Road
Glenboi
Mountain Ash
RCT
CF45 3DW**

Date of inspection: March 2019

by

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

About Glenboi Primary School

Glenboi Primary school is in the village of Glenboi, near Mountain Ash in Rhondda, Cynon Taf local authority. There are 134 pupils on roll, including 23 pupils in the nursery. There is a learning resource base for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties at the school, one single age, full time nursery class and four mixed age classes.

Around, 65% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is significantly above the national average of 18%. The school identifies 44% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is much higher than the national average of 21%. The acting headteacher took up her post in January 2019. The school's last inspection was in October 2011.

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

Glenboi primary school is a successful, nurturing and highly inclusive learning community where pupils make strong progress. The acting headteacher, school leaders and staff share a very clear vision for a school where every individual is valued and encouraged to develop as a confident independent learner. Pupils of all abilities develop strong literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, which they apply confidently across the curriculum.

The school provides an excellent range of strategies and interventions to support, nurture and challenge pupils as they develop as individuals. Pupils have an exceptionally positive attitude to learning and collaborate together very successfully. Teachers plan an effective range of enriching activities and encourage pupils to develop perseverance and resilience in their learning. They encourage pupils to take risks and learn from successes and mistakes in equal measure.

The school has a very strong and supportive relationship with parents. The innovative and highly successful parents' council provides an invaluable opportunity for parents to contribute to school improvement in a meaningful way.

Leaders maintain a very successful focus on constant school improvement. They place great value on the contribution of every member of staff and, as a result, all staff contribute successfully to developing the school's provision for the benefit of all pupils.

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

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that challenge for more able pupils reflects the school's best practice.

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the impact of provision for parental engagement on pupil progress, wellbeing and attitudes to learning, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils start school with literacy, numeracy and social skills below that which is expected for their age. Nearly all pupils make strong progress from their starting point.

Pupils identified with additional learning needs make good progress in relation to the targets outlined in their individual development plans. Pupils eligible for free school meals make strong progress over time. Most pupils recall prior learning confidently and concentrate very well during activities. They apply their knowledge and skills to new situations successfully.

Most pupils have a positive attitude towards the Welsh language. The Criw Cymraeg support their peers well and encourage them to use the language naturally throughout the day in familiar contexts. Most pupils speak confidently and many older pupils maintain extended conversations with their peers, staff and visitors. Most pupils' reading and writing in Welsh is developing well.

Pupils' oracy is a strength across the school. Despite having relatively low speaking skills on entry to the school, most make very good progress and develop as confident speakers. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Most respond to questions purposefully and express opinions thoughtfully. For example, most nursery pupils explain how they have designed a trap to catch a T-Rex in the wooded area outside the foundation phase. Most Year 5 and Year 6 pupils speak confidently about the enriching visits they have made as part of their project work. Many speak with great maturity about their appreciation of the support that school staff provide for them when challenges arise.

Most pupils enjoy reading from the time they start at the school. Most learn letters and sounds quickly and develop into increasingly independent readers. They enjoy reading to find information together and make suggestions about what they would like to learn. For example, many Year 2 pupils enjoy finding information as palaeontologists about where in the world different dinosaur remains were found.

Most key stage 2 pupils continue to make good progress with their reading. They use effective strategies when faced with new and challenging words. Many more able pupils read with very good expression and pay effective attention to direct speech, emphasising characterisation and mood within a text. Many use their higher order reading skills confidently, for example when researching a project about urban street art.

Most pupils' writing is developing well. Foundation phase pupils enjoy mark making and start writing from an early age. Many Year 1 and Year 2 pupils write confidently and show a very high level of perseverance with their tasks, for example when writing an informal letter to Dippy asking for information about his life as a diplodocus. Less able pupils also develop very well as independent writers who enjoy expressing their views on paper to share with their peers and teachers.

Most key stage 2 pupils write confidently in a variety of genres. For example, many Year 3 and Year 4 pupils write an engaging and effective recount of Boudicca's rebellion as part of their project work on the Romans and the Celts. Most Year 5 and Year 6 pupils maintain good progress with their writing. They produce engaging and highly sensitive poetry when writing about their local area in autumn. This includes the particularly effective line, 'cracked windows poured rainbow colours, and the streets were full of leaves.'

Most pupils have good mathematical skills. Most pupils in the foundation phase have a strong understanding of number. Many more able Year 1 and Year 2 pupils have a good grasp of large numbers and explain how they look back 65 million years into history when learning about prehistoric animals. Many reception pupils use analogue clocks confidently when comparing their daily routine with that of a superhero.

Across key stage 2, most pupils have good number, shape and data skills. They consolidate their skills successfully through accessing secure online activities at home. Many Year 5 and Year 6 pupils apply their numeracy skills in an effective range of contexts across the curriculum, for example when designing an attractive symmetrical Roman tile and when researching the time difference between Londinium and cities across the Roman Empire.

Across the school, most pupils make good progress in information and communication technology. Many foundation phase pupils use a variety of equipment and software confidently to research and record their work. They use programmable robots accurately. They use recording software successfully to assess their work.

Most key stage 2 pupils make informed choices about the most effective equipment to support their learning. They log onto their accounts at school and at home in order to develop their work further and understand the importance of staying safe online. They use green screen technology successfully when creating interesting presentations to share information with their peers.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils are highly engaged and motivated to learn and they develop very well within the school's caring and supportive ethos. Nearly all pupils are polite and treat visitors, teachers and each other with respect. Their understanding of values such as honesty, fairness and equality is very strong. Most Year 5 and Year 6 pupils engage maturely in a debate about the importance of equality in society, and why everyone should be treated equally. Nearly all pupils take great pride in their progress and achievements.

Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school, with nearly all pupils showing great care and consideration towards others. For example, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils walk to and from assembly hand in hand with younger pupils and sit with them to model good behaviour. Pupils follow class routines and instructions very well and move purposefully around the school. Nearly all pupils engage confidently with new and unfamiliar experiences. For example, pupils in the nursery class explore the woodland area with enthusiasm, designing and setting traps for dinosaurs using materials they have selected.

Identified pupils benefit greatly from weekly mindfulness and emotional support sessions. They learn relaxation techniques that help them manage stressful situations and deal with their emotions more effectively. Many pupils talk confidently about their feelings and the strategies that help them. For example, they use breathing strategies to calm themselves when they experience negative emotions.

All pupils feel safe and secure in school. They know whom to talk to if they have a problem. Friendship issues at break times and lunchtimes are dealt with effectively by older pupils who act as 'playground leaders'. From an early age, most pupils have a sound understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet and understand the importance of keeping their username and password secure.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise. Nearly all younger pupils enjoy using the playground equipment which improves their hand to eye co-ordination and balance successfully. Most key stage 2 pupils use the trim trail which develops their strength effectively. They are highly engaged and respond with great enthusiasm to 'bush craft' and physical activity workshops run by a local representative from the armed services. This has a particularly strong impact on their wellbeing and attitudes to exercise. Many are aware of the amount of sugar in drinks and the need to limit their intake. They know how fruit and vegetables and drinking water are an essential part of a healthy and balanced diet.

Many pupils take on leadership roles very confidently. Members of the school council are proactive and listen carefully to the views and opinions of their peers. For example, pupils identified a need for additional playground equipment, such as parachutes and football goals. The council liaised effectively with the 'friends of Glenboi' to secure funds to purchase fixed playground equipment.

The 'digital leaders' help pupils successfully to gain a better understanding of how to use electronic devices and apps during lessons. They are highly effective in their role. They support their peers and staff with new or unfamiliar activities very successfully. They lead assemblies on internet safety giving advice about how to stay safe online.

Pupils are actively involved in raising money for various charities. They raised money for a cancer charity by hosting a coffee and cake morning and wearing red for the day. Pupils develop a very high level of empathy for the needs of others.

Nearly all pupils are confident, independent learners. They demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning and persevere very successfully with their tasks. They have a clear understanding of what to do when they find work difficult. Most pupils share ideas and opinions very maturely when collaborating on tasks. They show very good maturity in their attitude to work, realising that it is acceptable to get things wrong, as this will lead to new learning. They develop a high level of resilience when encountering challenge, and show an exceptional degree of enthusiasm towards their learning.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers and support staff have strong and very supportive relationships with their pupils. Staff plan an effective range of stimulating activities, which engage pupils

successfully in their learning. Teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to contribute ideas when they embark on a new project. As a result, pupils have a high level of ownership of their learning and are very enthusiastic when taking part in activities. For example, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils were very interested to know where the bones of different dinosaurs were found and, as a result, learned about the different continents of the world.

Staff expect good behaviour from pupils. They sustain consistent and fair class and school rules and the school is a very orderly and hardworking community. Staff encourage pupils to work independently and make decisions about their learning. As a result, most pupils across the school engage in independent learning purposefully and show very good perseverance to complete their task in the allocated time. Staff encourage pupils to develop a wide range of age appropriate skills, to be creative and not be unduly concerned about making mistakes. For example, they encourage less confident writers to express themselves and develop confidence in their ability to write, even if they may not spell every word correctly.

Teachers share learning intentions with the pupils suitably, and include pupils in setting success criteria, which they use purposefully as part of the assessment process. Teachers use verbal feedback effectively, providing support and challenge for pupils in equal measure. Written feedback for pupils is effective, and succinct. Staff use consistent strategies, such as 'what went well,' and 'even better if,' successfully across the school. They provide effective opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers. As a result, most pupils have a sound understanding of what they need to do to develop and improve their work further. For example, many pupils re-draft their work confidently, making significant improvements from the original version.

The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and engaging. Leaders and staff have embraced the principles of the new curriculum for Wales and include the areas of learning and experience in their planning. Long, medium and short-term planning is thorough and effective, and provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge skills and understanding in highly engaging contexts. In the most successful practice, staff ensure effective challenge for learners of all abilities. However, a few activities do not always provide sufficient challenge for the more able. Staff arrange exciting activities and visits to enrich project work and include pupils in making decisions about the direction their learning will take. As a result, most pupils have ownership of their work and demonstrate great enthusiasm and perseverance when carrying out their tasks. The creative arts, science and knowledge and understanding of the world are planned for particularly effectively.

The principles of the foundation phase are well embedded. Staff provide a broad range of focused tasks and also regular opportunities for pupils to make free choices about which activity to do next. This enables pupils to grow in confidence and learn to make sensible decisions. This focus on developing independence among the pupils is a strength across the school.

Immersion days and rich tasks provide innovative opportunities for the pupils to develop their skills in an effective range of contexts. There is effective planning to develop literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum. Provision to develop the pupils Welsh language skills are effective.

Staff use the language naturally with the pupils throughout the day. Teachers ensure purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture and heritage of the local area and Wales. Leaders, teachers and staff regularly update and develop the school's curriculum. They use outside areas creatively to provide a stimulating range of activities for pupils. They make effective use of visitors and engage parents successfully through regular communication, sharing information, which includes them in their child's learning.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is extremely effective in tracking and monitoring pupils' progress, wellbeing and attitudes to learning. Teachers identify pupils' educational, emotional and social needs at an early stage and provide them with highly effective support and deliver a wide range of intervention programmes to a very high standard. As a result, nearly all pupils make strong progress from their starting point. All pupils with additional learning needs have detailed individual development plans which include measurable and challenging targets. Teachers share these plans with pupils and parents and progress is monitored regularly.

Regular meetings between the additional learning needs co-ordinator and staff enable the sharing of detailed and constructive advice, which teachers and support staff implement successfully with pupils. The acting headteacher discusses pupils' achievements with staff regularly. This ensures that the attainment of learners is very closely monitored and prompt action taken to ensure continued progress.

The school communicates information very effectively to parents. The school website provides useful advice to help parents support their child's learning at home, for example 10 tips for listening to your child read. Parents receive highly informative monthly newsletters that provide detailed and very useful information about events and explain the importance of good attendance. Parents appreciate the highly effective programme of support the school provides, which encourages resilience and wellbeing amongst the pupils successfully.

Pupil reports provide very detailed information about pupils' progress and how they can improve their learning in numeracy and literacy and build on their individual strengths. Teachers give detailed updates on pupils' achievements in termly meetings with parents. Parents feel confident to approach staff to ask for help or discuss their child's progress. They are confident that the school will support them and work as effective partners to solve problems when they arise. This is a very strong and consistent feature of the school.

The family engagement officer is highly effective in engaging with parents and external agencies. She supports the delivery of highly successful programmes, which have a very positive impact on pupils' wellbeing, attendance and attitudes to learning. For example parents and grandparents take part in regular workshops with their children aimed at developing basic skills and lifelong learning.

The family engagement officer monitors attendance carefully and liaises closely with parents and staff. She offers outstanding practical support to families who find it a struggle to send their children to school on time.

A very successful feature of the school is the proactive parent council. It is a representative body through which parents can consult with each other and with the governing body. In a recent meeting, parents looked at examples of peer and self-assessment in a range of pupils' books. They suggested changing the nature of homework to make tasks more open ended and interesting for pupils. The school acted on this and pupils now enjoy completing their homework in a more open ended and flexible way. As a result, many pupils and parents appreciate the value of taking part in meaningful learning activities outside school.

The school encourages pupils to lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils take part in a wellbeing week where they learn relaxation techniques in yoga and mindfulness, which have a very positive impact on their wellbeing. There are effective arrangements to help pupils make correct lifestyle choices. For example, Year 6 pupils learn how anti-social behaviour affects the lives of others in the community.

The school promotes spiritual, moral and cultural awareness well. Through a range of effective assemblies, and circle time activities, pupils are provided with opportunities for reflection. Pupils learn about life in different countries through enriching activities such as the global citizenship day. The school offers very effective opportunities to promote pupils' understanding of values through class based activities, interactive assemblies and informative displays.

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

Leadership and management: Excellent

The acting headteacher and senior leadership team provide very strong direction for the school and have very high expectations of staff and pupils. They have a clear vision for the development of the school as a successful, nurturing learning community. This is communicated to all stakeholders and contributes successfully to a whole-school ethos, which provides an outstandingly supportive environment for pupils and their families. This is a particular strength of the school.

School leaders are successful in meeting national and local priorities. For example they encourage teachers to be innovative in developing strategies to implement the four core purposes of the new curriculum for Wales. They are ambitious and very effective in seeking to implement change and drive up standards of teaching and learning. They are not afraid to take calculated risks in the interests of raising pupils' achievement. For example, the deputy headteacher has been instrumental in leading improvements to the way teachers plan, particularly in ensuring cleverly planned progression in skills development as pupils move through the school. As a result, the redesigned and enriched curriculum offers pupils a wealth of stimulating and challenging learning experiences which engage them purposefully. These have a significant impact on pupils' progress and lead to high levels of pupil wellbeing.

An outstanding feature of the school is the clear, unwavering focus on improving the wellbeing of pupils and raising their aspirations through enabling them to become capable, confident and resilient learners. The partnership and trust between school and home is a substantial strength. For example, the extensive and purposeful work the school has done to engage parents through projects such as families and school together (FAST) has helped parents have a better understanding of their child's learning journey.

The school is extremely successful in reducing the effect of poverty and deprivation on vulnerable pupils. It makes particularly good use of the pupil development grant to support the many pupils who are eligible for free school meals. For example, the family engagement officer provides outstanding support for parents and the school makes every effort to help pupils and their families if needed. This has had an extremely positive effect on improving the standards and wellbeing of these pupils and enables most to make good progress from their starting points.

Distributed leadership is highly effective and contributes extremely well to the sense of community within the school. For example, after attending professional development training, the deputy headteacher led a whole school initiative to develop a positive attitude to learning in pupils. This is already having a very positive effect on pupils' resilience and the ability of most pupils to persevere and learn from their experiences. As a result, pupils of all ages speak confidently about how making mistakes helps them learn and how not giving up is important if they want to succeed.

All members of staff have specific job descriptions and understand their roles and responsibilities well. There is a strong and sustained culture of professional development for staff at all levels. As a result, teaching and support staff feel valued and empowered to develop their own practice. Support staff are an integral part of the team and attend staff meetings alongside teachers. They contribute successfully towards improving pupils' standards and wellbeing. For example, learning support assistants take the lead in managing a number of interventions, including reading, mathematics and emotional wellbeing programmes.

The school works very effectively with other schools locally and further afield. This provides valuable opportunities for all members of staff to share experiences and good practice with others outside the school and to lead training. For example, teachers have joined forces with other schools to learn about and introduce collaborative working, which is having a positive effect on how pupils interact with each other during activities.

The governing body play a key role in ensuring an effective strategic direction for the school. They have a broad range of interests and valuable professional expertise. Governors know the school very well and use their knowledge gained through their regular monitoring visits, to hold the school to account for its performance very effectively. Their strategic input into self-evaluation procedures is highly effective. The acting headteacher and governing body manage the school's budget rigorously and purchase resources efficiently to enrich the curriculum and support pupils' learning.

The school has developed a highly effective culture of continuous self-evaluation, which draws on a range of first-hand evidence and focuses very effectively on pupils' outcomes. Arrangements for monitoring and self-evaluation are rigorous. Consequently, leaders, staff and governors have an extremely detailed and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This allows them to bring about improvements quickly and successfully.

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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