



A report on

**Glan Usk Primary School
Bank Street
Newport
NP19 7HF**

Date of inspection: May 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:

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

Glan Usk Primary School is situated in the city of Newport and provides education for 656 pupils (633.5 full-time equivalent) aged from three to 11 years old. The school has evolved from the amalgamation of three separate schools, Durham Road Infant School, Durham Road Junior School and Rockfield Nursery, in September 2008. Staff and pupils moved into brand new purpose built accommodation in January 2010. There are 22 single age classes at the school.

The school serves a densely populated area in the St Julian's ward of the city, which it describes as being neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Since amalgamation, there has been a downward trend in pupils' baseline on entry, which is generally below the local authority averages.

Approximately 20% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is slightly below the Welsh average. Fifteen percent of pupils have English as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language.

The school has identified approximately 21% of pupils as having additional learning needs. Nine pupils have a statement of additional learning needs. Currently there are two pupils who are 'looked after' by the local authority.

The school has achieved many awards. It is an accredited Healthy School, and has achieved Eco School status. It has met the standards to gain Investors in People accreditation and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Glan Usk Primary School is £2,612, which compares with a maximum of £6,996 and a minimum of £2,612 for primary schools in Newport. The school has the lowest budget per pupil of the 48 primary schools in Newport.

The above budget statement needs to take account of the fact that Newport local authority funds Glan Usk Primary School as a privately funded initiative (PFI).

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Excellent

Current performance

The current performance of the school is good because:

- nearly all pupils make good progress during their time in school;
- the behaviour of pupils across the school is exemplary;
- the school has an extremely positive ethos where the contribution of all pupils and staff is valued highly; and
- all staff work highly effectively as a team in order to ensure the best outcomes for all pupils.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- leaders and managers provide highly effective leadership;
- there are high quality and innovative management structures which empower, support and enable staff to fulfil their roles very successfully;
- the school has rigorous procedures for self-evaluation which are linked explicitly to priorities for improvement; and
- pupil involvement in self-evaluation is innovative and highly effective.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 further improve the attainment of boys at the higher levels at key stage 2;
- R2 further improve standards of reading in Welsh as a second language; and
- R3 ensure that teaching is consistently good or better across the school.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn may invite the school to prepare written case studies describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

On entry, pupils' skills in communication and wellbeing are below the local authority average. However, nearly all pupils make progress which is good or very good in relation to their starting points during their time at school.

Data over the last two years, since the opening of the new school, shows that pupils at seven years of age do better on average than pupils in other schools in Wales in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. They also do better on average than pupils in the family of schools (schools with similar characteristics) in mathematics and science. When compared with schools within the same free school meals band, the school has fluctuated between being within the top 25% and the lower 50% of schools in English and between being within the upper 50% and the top 25% in mathematics and science. In 2010, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level two or above in English was higher than the all-Wales average but slightly below that of the family of schools. In mathematics and science, this percentage was higher than of the average for the family and Wales. End of key stage data also suggests that the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level three has been inconsistent when compared with the family of schools and all-Wales averages over the last two years.

The percentage of pupils at 11 years of age attaining the expected level four or above in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is consistently higher than the average for similar schools and Wales. When compared with schools within the same free school meals band, the school's performance has been in the upper 50% or the top 25% over 2009 and 2010. On average over the last two years, pupils have also done better than expected at 11 years of age when compared with pupils in similar schools and Wales as a whole. This is mainly because of the good performance of girls when compared to boys'. Pupils with additional learning needs and those with English as a second language make very good progress towards achieving the targets set for them. More able and talented pupils and those currently entitled to free school meals are progressing well.

Pupils across the school achieve good or sometimes very good standards in their learning skills with most being aware of the skills that they are developing within each lesson. Nearly all pupils use these skills well in a wide range of contexts as they develop as independent learners.

Pupils in all year groups read confidently at a standard suitable to their age and ability. Nearly all pupils have good listening skills, and most write well and accurately for a variety of purposes. They use their numeracy skills appropriately across a range of subjects.

Standards of pupils' information and communication technology are very good. There are some outstanding examples of work by older pupils including the creation

of movie clips enriched by sound.

Pupils' attitudes to Wales and learning Welsh are positive. The bilingual and Welsh language skills of the majority of pupils are developing well. Many older pupils hold simple conversations and answer straightforward questions appropriately. The majority of pupils show increasing confidence with their writing. However, older pupils do not read with sufficient expression in the Welsh language.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Levels of pupil wellbeing and involvement are exceptionally high throughout the school as a result of the excellent and innovative provision on offer.

All pupils are highly engaged in their learning and display considerable pride in their work and their school. Behaviour and attitudes to all aspects of school life are exemplary. Attendance, at 92.5%, is equal to that of the local authority. However, most recent figures show a significant improvement since moving to the new school building. Many pupils speak maturely about their feelings and show high levels of care and support for others. They understand the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise.

Pupils' ability to make decisions is excellent. The work of the school council and the pupil VOICE team (Valuing Opportunities for Investigation and Child-Led Enquiry) in developing pupils' decision-making skills is sector leading. The research it carries out ensures that pupils are able to participate fully in shaping important aspects of the work of the school and raises standards in wellbeing significantly.

Pupils feel safe in school. They are fully involved in agreeing school rules, and understand and support the behaviour management systems. Older pupils have a mature understanding of their rights in relation to the Welsh Assembly Government Core Aims and the United Nations' Rights of the Child.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

The school provides a wide range of after-school activities, which are available to all pupils. These are attended well by pupils and support the taught curriculum effectively.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and covers all statutory requirements fully. Teachers work together very well to plan the detailed and comprehensive schemes of work. This planning develops pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding systematically throughout all phases and challenges them appropriately.

The school uses an integrated topic-based approach for most subject areas successfully. This encourages pupils to develop their research and practical skills well and extends their knowledge in a variety of subjects. The school reinforces these effectively through well-planned lessons and school assemblies.

Provision for Welsh development is good. The school continually provides staff with appropriate support in order to improve the provision for Welsh language development across the school, which includes working with the Athrawes Fro. Encouraging the use of incidental Welsh regularly throughout the day is having a positive impact on standards.

Providing opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture and the general life of Welsh people and their surroundings is an important and successful feature of the school's provision.

The school promotes education for sustainable development and global citizenship successfully. Pupils are encouraged to recycle and to learn how to live sustainably. They have good knowledge of pollution and its impact on the environment. Pupils learn about their place in the wider world, for example through links with a school in Nairobi, curricular work on other countries and through their charity fundraising efforts.

Teaching: Good

Most teachers have high expectations and a very good understanding of pupils' needs and abilities. In many lessons, teachers use a range of teaching approaches, and successfully challenge and support learners to succeed. In the best lessons, well planned activities ensure that nearly all pupils enjoy learning, are fully involved and make good progress. In a few lessons, teachers do not always make sure that all pupils understand the topic before being asked to carry out an activity. This results in those pupils making slower progress.

Many teachers apply their good subject knowledge well and ask questions in order to extend pupils' thinking. Teachers plan in detail and identify learning objectives and skills clearly, which they consistently share with pupils.

Assessment of pupils' work is consistently good. Teachers provide pupils with regular feedback, which identifies what they have achieved and how they can make further progress. In best practice, teachers ensure that pupils have appropriate opportunities to respond to this feedback. Learning diaries enable all pupils in key stage 2 to set and review their own targets. Teachers keep detailed assessment records on each pupil and use them accurately to track progress and plan the next steps. A robust system of moderation involving all teachers ensures that these assessments are accurate. Teachers provide parents with appropriate information about their child's achievements and progress.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school places a very strong emphasis on developing pupils' health and wellbeing. The work of pupil support officers and the outstanding use of social and emotional development programmes have a very positive impact on pupils' wellbeing. The school's wellbeing team provides an innovative and extremely well co-ordinated approach to improving the wellbeing of all pupils. The ownership, self-motivation and expertise of this team offer exceptional support to individual

pupils and families, and result in very high standards of wellbeing. This is outstanding practice.

The school promotes very effectively the importance of good attendance and positive behaviour. This is having a particularly significant impact on pupils' attendance.

The school is a very caring community where everyone is valued. Members of staff provide a wide range of innovative opportunities for pupils to contribute and participate in decision-making, which have a very positive impact on their moral and social development. The school provides pupils with suitable and exciting opportunities for developing their spiritual and cultural development through class lessons, assemblies and project work.

The school has developed excellent relationships with external agencies and other professionals to provide effective support to vulnerable pupils and their parents. A well-balanced programme of targeted in-class, group and individual support ensures that staff identify and provide appropriate help that meets the needs of all pupils, including those with additional needs. They review progress regularly and adapt support as necessary. Parents appreciate the good quality information the school provides them through the website and newsletters.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Excellent

The school is a close and inclusive community where all pupils feel valued and have equal access to the school's provision. Diversity and equality are guiding principles for all aspects of the school's life and work.

Members of staff manage and use all facilities exceptionally well to ensure the best opportunities for the whole school community and all types of learners. They provide an attractive and welcoming environment for the pupils, community and all stakeholders. Classrooms are spacious. Resources are plentiful and of a high standard. Pupils benefit from the use of multiple areas designed for developing independent learning skills. The multi-surface sports area and all weather pitch enable pupils to access a wide range of sports within the school grounds.

The use of the high quality accommodation fully realises the vision of the school and promotes increased engagement, attendance and wellbeing of pupils. This is an outstanding feature.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Excellent
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Leadership: Excellent

The headteacher and deputy headteachers promote the ambitious mission to 'excite, challenge, and empower' very successfully. Their drive and firm commitment to improving standards and providing pupils with the best opportunities for learning is exceptional. Together, they provide outstanding leadership for the school.

Since amalgamation, senior leaders have created high quality, innovative management structures to support and empower all staff that enables them to fulfil their roles very successfully. All members of staff have clearly defined responsibilities. They work well together in a range of effective teams that provide exceptional direction and leadership to their areas of responsibility. This is an outstanding feature of the school's leadership.

Well-structured performance management arrangements link appropriately to many local and national priorities and identify suitable professional development opportunities for all staff. These contribute very well to improvements in standards. In the short period since amalgamation, middle managers have become very effective in assuring the quality of their areas of responsibility.

The governing body carries out its duties very effectively. Governors have an in-depth knowledge of the performance of the school and rigorously hold it to account for the standards and quality it achieves. They have a strong commitment to improving their own contribution to school improvement. Governors fulfil their legal and regulatory duties well.

School initiatives to meet local and national priorities are developing strongly. Members of staff give a very high priority to tackling social disadvantage and ensuring pupils' wellbeing. The implementation of the skills curriculum and the Foundation Phase is progressing well.

Improving quality: Excellent

The school has highly effective procedures for self-evaluation which are embedded in strategic planning and linked explicitly to priorities for improvement.

School leaders and staff at all levels have a very accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They analyse performance data very well and make excellent use of an extremely wide range of rigorous monitoring activities to evaluate standards and wellbeing in detail.

Leaders at all levels take very good account of the views of staff, parents, governors and pupils. The contribution of pupils to self-evaluation through the VOICE team is an innovative and highly effective approach to listening to learners and is sector leading. For example, the actions implemented as a result of pupil research into the reward system have had a very positive impact on behaviour and engagement in lessons.

The school has instigated a very wide range of professional learning communities within the school and in collaboration with other schools. They are data driven and firmly based on high quality research methods, have a positive impact on pupils' standards and wellbeing, and support the professional development of all staff very effectively.

Partnership working: Excellent

The school has established highly effective links with a range of partners including other schools, teacher-training providers, churches and businesses. These make a strong contribution to raising pupils' standards of achievement. For example, members of the local secondary school staff teach French and Spanish on a weekly basis to Year 6 pupils, secondary school pupils provide coaching for after-school sports clubs, and the school maintenance contractors provide the school eco committee with very detailed feedback on energy consumption, which they are then able to monitor.

Arrangements for pupils transferring to secondary education are effective. The school provides strong leadership to local schools in co-ordinating work on the integrated topic approach and moderating standards of pupils' work in the Foundation Phase and at key stage 2. These partnerships contribute well to teachers' professional development and pupils' learning.

The school trains its staff to provide a range of excellent programmes for parents on literacy, numeracy and emotional support. The number of parents taking up these opportunities is increasing and many obtain national qualifications. Tracking pupils' work in school demonstrates that their children make good progress following their involvement. This is outstanding practice.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its finances very well. It prioritises and monitors expenditure carefully and resources the school's priorities appropriately. The school deploys teaching and support staff very well in order to meet the needs of all pupils. There is effective management of teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time. There are plenty of good-quality learning resources and excellent standards of accommodation, which leaders manage well. The school has invested heavily in information and communication technology, which has been particularly effective in raising pupils' standards of achievement.

In view of the appropriate use the school makes of its funding and the consistently good progress made by most pupils, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Learner questionnaires

Of the 120 pupils who responded to the questionnaire, all feel safe in school, that they are doing well and that the teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress.

Nearly all feel that the school deals well with any bullying and know whom to talk to if they are worried, upset or feel that the work is too hard for them. Nearly all also feel that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and give them sufficient opportunities to get regular exercise, and that the school has enough books, equipment and computers for them to do their work.

Most pupils think that homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school and that nearly all children behave well at playtimes and lunchtimes.

Many believe that other children behave well and that they can get their work done.

Parent questionnaires

All the 71 questionnaires returned are very positive.

All feel that their child is safe and likes school, that teaching is good and that the homework given builds well on what their child learns in school.

Nearly all are satisfied with the school and feel that it is run well. They believe that pupils behave well in school, that their child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the school and that their child is making good progress. They also feel that staff treat all pupils fairly, with respect and have expectations for children to work hard and do their best. Nearly all feel that their child is encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise and that their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs they may have. They also feel that they are informed well about their child's progress, that they are comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or problems, and that they understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints. Nearly all believe that the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility, and that they are prepared well for moving on to their next school. They also feel that the school provides a good range of activities including trips or visits.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Huw Watkins AI	Reporting Inspector
Rick Hawley HMI	Team Inspector
Eleanor Davies HMI	Team Inspector
Sarah Morgan HMI	Team Inspector
Deirdre Emberson	Lay Inspector
Peter Morris	Peer Inspector
Jeff Beecher	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