



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

A report on

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

Date of inspection: March 2018

by

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

About Glan Usk Primary School

Glan Usk Primary School is in the city of Newport. It provides education for 683 pupils aged from three to eleven years old, including 64 who attend the nursery class part-time.

There are 22 single age classes at the school. The school was last inspected in 2011. The headteacher took up his post in 2008.

The three year average for pupils eligible for free school meals is around 16%. This figure has decreased recently and is now below the Welsh average of 19%. Around 20% of pupils speak English as an additional language. This proportion has increased notably in recent years. Between them, pupils speak 16 different languages in addition to English, although no pupils speak Welsh as their first language.

The school has identified approximately 22% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is in line with the Welsh average. A very few pupils are looked after by the local authority.

The school is currently a pioneer school and is working with the Welsh Government and other schools to take forward developments relating to the curriculum and professional learning.

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

This school has an inspirational, holistic curriculum, which is highly effective in engaging nearly all pupils. This is because pupils want to learn about interesting topics that they have chosen. In addition, teachers' thorough planning and highly creative teaching ensures that nearly all pupils achieve their best. Adults know and care for their pupils extremely well. They are quick to intervene whenever any pupil may be at risk of falling behind, and ensure that nearly all pupils acquire the skills that they need to succeed in their learning.

As a result, nearly all pupils work hard and achieve particularly well. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are exemplary. Their standards of communication are very strong. Nearly all are confident and competent mathematicians, and nearly all make highly effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for learning.

The exemplary provision and high standards are a direct result of exceptional leadership. Teachers and leaders are expert, reflective practitioners who continually strive to improve. In addition, leaders make highly effective use of professional learning to share their school's successes with others across Wales.

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

Recommendations

R1 Improve attendance

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare case studies on its work in relation to the innovative, holistic curriculum and the school as a learning organisation, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Excellent

Overall, pupils' oracy skills are outstanding. Across the school, nearly all pupils listen exceptionally well to adults and to each other. They pay close attention to what others say, ask thoughtful questions to develop ideas and make highly effective contributions that take account of the views of others. Across the different classes, most pupils' speaking skills are very good and they use a rich, well-chosen vocabulary. For example, many pupils in the nursery explain clearly to the adults which activities they would like to complete during the session. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils are extremely articulate and mature speakers. When expressing opinions, they provide well thought through reasons to support their views, for example about the life of Rosa Parks or Nelson Mandela.

Most pupils in the foundation phase develop a good phonic knowledge and use this very well to help them to read. In the nursery, pupils read their own names and begin to recognise the sounds that letters make. Nearly all pupils in Year 1 use a wide range of strategies to read unfamiliar words successfully. By Year 2, more able pupils read with good expression, for instance raising their voices when a character in a story shouts. Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 read fluently and with a good understanding. By the end of Year 6, nearly all pupils are enthusiastic readers. They read a wide range of texts and talk about the joy of getting lost in a book. Most pupils make thoughtful inferences and deductions, for example finding clues to explain how characters might be feeling when this is not explicitly stated.

Across the school, nearly all pupils write successfully to communicate for a range of purposes, both in literacy lessons and in other areas of learning. Most pupils take exemplary care to present their written work well and with pride. In the nursery class, they make suitable marks and symbols to represent what they want to explore that day. By Year 2, nearly all pupils write interesting stories independently, using a good vocabulary. They write clear explanations about the different types of waves in oceans and recount the story of Diwali. In key stage 2, nearly all pupils write very well. Most pupils plan their writing effectively using a good range of strategies, and improve their work successfully through careful editing and redrafting. They show an extensive understanding of the features of different text types. By Year 6, most pupils are mature and thoughtful writers, whether in literacy lessons or in other subjects. For example, they write high quality essays comparing themes and characters from the book 'The Invention of Hugo Cabret', and imaginative, creative poetry about John Frost and the Chartist uprising in Newport.

Nearly all pupils have a positive attitude to learning and speaking Welsh. From nursery, most pupils understand and follow simple instructions well. They count aloud, begin to use a few words and phrases regularly and enjoy singing Welsh songs. As they progress through key stage 2, most pupils continue to develop their speaking skills successfully, and extend their conversation. By Year 6, many read simple Welsh texts with understanding. They write well in Welsh for different contexts, such as pen-portraits and post cards. Across the school, most pupils use the Welsh language effectively and confidently in a range of activities beyond Welsh lessons, for example in the reception class, when counting items in a pictogram.

Across the school, most pupils are confident and highly competent mathematicians. Nearly all pupils develop a very good understanding of the different areas of mathematics, such as measures, number and shape, and use these well independently. For example, in the reception classes, pupils successfully create a tally chart of their favourite animals, to determine their most and least favourite. They represent their findings as graphs and interpret the data correctly. In Year 6, pupils calculate and compare the areas of different classrooms accurately and work out the cost of new carpets. Across the school, nearly all pupils make very good progress in developing their mental calculation skills and recall of key number facts. Nearly all develop their mathematical skills to a very good standard, and apply these skills extremely well in many different practical situations.

In ICT, nearly all pupils achieve very good standards. By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils use technology confidently, for example to programme a wheeled toy. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils are confident to use computers and hand-held devices as tools across many aspects of their learning and life in school. For instance, the Year 6 house captains use an ongoing spreadsheet to tally the house point totals accurately each week and report the current leader to their peers.

Pupils start school with skills and understanding around the level expected for their age. Nearly all make very good progress over time, although generally, girls' progress is faster than that of boys. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to underachievement make particularly strong progress from their starting points. The school has sustained these high rates of progress over time.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Nearly all pupils' attitudes towards learning are exceptionally strong. In nearly all classes, pupils participate actively and enthusiastically. They sustain concentration successfully when working on individual and group tasks. For example, in Year 6, pupils work collaboratively to discuss alternative approaches to calculate the area of compound shapes and to check their answers are reasonable. They support each other's learning very effectively. As a result, nearly all pupils are confident, independent learners who take risks to stretch and challenge themselves.

Nearly all pupils have a strong understanding of their personal learning targets and what they need to do to improve their work. Across the school, pupils take a lead role in determining what they want to learn, as part of the innovative bespoke curriculum. This has an outstanding impact on pupils' self-esteem and enthusiasm for learning. Across the school, nearly all pupils are highly motivated and talk with pride about lessons they have planned.

Nearly all pupils make mature and sensible decisions during their regular, highly effective pupil learning reviews, and consequently they enhance their own ability to learn. For example, as a result of their discussions and subsequent targets, most pupils have well-developed strategies to be resilient in their learning, to avoid distractions and focus single-mindedly on their work.

From Year 2, pupils take on a highly effective range of leadership roles through the school's action groups. The pupil leadership team bring the ideas of the different pupil groups together to formulate an action plan with the school's senior leadership

team. Members of this group have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, set out in their job descriptions. These include welcoming visitors, and making presentations to guests and governors. Their input has an extensive impact on the strategic direction of the school. Other older pupils take on a range of roles proudly, with a high degree of responsibility for the everyday running of the school.

Nearly all pupils have a mature understanding of the importance of keeping healthy, by eating and drinking sensibly and by participating in physical activities. The pupil leadership team take a lead role in the development of the pupil-run fruit tuck shop, wellbeing warriors and the daily mile.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities that are available and many attend them regularly. For example, they enjoy rugby, netball, dancing and pottery. As a result, most pupils develop their fitness, confidence, self-esteem and social skills very well.

Most pupils are punctual in the mornings. Attendance has improved this year. However, a few pupils do not attend school regularly enough.

Nearly all pupils feel extremely safe and thoroughly enjoy school. Pupils move around school and change activities and learning areas in an exemplary manner. Behaviour is outstanding. Nearly all pupils treat each other, staff and visitors very respectfully.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

The school's bespoke curriculum is creative and innovative. Teachers ensure that the curriculum builds on pupils' knowledge and understanding systematically, through a progressive and comprehensive framework of skills. However, the pupils themselves decide the topic and context for learning. This reflects the well-embedded ethos of the school in listening to pupils' views, and the extremely positive way in which adults support pupils to make decisions about their own learning. The curriculum is particularly successful in engaging pupils' interests and meeting their needs. It develops pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding extremely well. As a result, classrooms are highly stimulating and engaging places, in which nearly all pupils learn productively and thoroughly enjoy their learning.

A pioneering feature of the curriculum is that pupils plan, and on occasions deliver, their own lessons to their peers. Every pupil contributes his or her ideas, through regular immersion days. This ensures that all pupils are thoroughly engaged in their learning and find the work interesting and motivating. As one pupil explained, 'the best lessons are the ones I plan'.

There is a wide range of exciting learning experiences within each topic area. The outside areas, including the forest school, are engaging and exciting. Specialist providers such as musicians and sports coaches, and carefully chosen visits and visitors, enrich the curriculum effectively. Pupils have very good opportunities to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales, for example through trips to local landmarks and museums.

In lessons, all pupils in a cohort complete the same activity, which has been designed by one of their peers. This enables the whole class to discuss and explore the task together. However, within the activity, teachers identify expertly the skills that different pupils need to learn next, to ensure that each pupil is challenged to achieve their best. Teachers' planning is exceptionally purposeful in providing these well-focused opportunities for all pupils to develop their skills. This level of meticulous preparation is possible because highly creative teachers plan lessons within close-knit teams, sharing the workload across their three parallel classes. In a very few subject areas, for example mathematics, teachers use discrete subject teaching. This is highly effective in ensuring that nearly all pupils are challenged at the correct level, and make at least the progress they should. In addition, teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' Welsh language skills across the school and the curriculum.

Teachers integrate literacy, numeracy and ICT planning seamlessly across the context for learning. As a result, pupils' learning links together cohesively across the different subject and skills areas, and pupils apply their skills particularly well. For example, teachers across key stage 2 plan to develop pupils' holistic communication skills, rather than focusing specifically on the separate skills of reading, writing and oracy. As a result, many pupils are well equipped with the personal skills to empathise with characters they read about in a story, or to deduce what actions they might take next. They then transfer this skill very successfully to their own story telling and writing.

The quality of teaching over time is excellent, and results in pupils' strong and sustained progress. Nearly all teachers manage their classrooms highly effectively, and nearly all adults manage pupils' behaviour very well. They structure learning thoughtfully to engage nearly all pupils as active participants. Working relationships are extremely positive, and nearly all teachers have very high expectations of pupils' standards and behaviour.

Nearly all adults ask questions skilfully to make pupils think more deeply about their learning. They target their questions well, for example to challenge more able pupils to think deeply, or less confident pupils to contribute to class discussions purposefully. Their questions help pupils to recall what they already know, and to make links in their learning across the different topics.

The school's ethos and focus on emotional intelligence ensures that nearly all pupils take responsibility for their own learning behaviours. For example, most have the vocabulary and confidence to identify for themselves if they are not achieving as well as they could, and ask for help.

Teachers provide high quality feedback to their pupils, and provide them with regular time to respond to this feedback. As a result, nearly all pupils improve their own work. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and moderate their assessments robustly to ensure their accuracy.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is an emotionally intelligent community that values, motivates and respects all of its members. The school's culture is based around nurturing pupils to be exceptional, resilient learners. As a result, nearly all pupils are extremely confident, self-aware learners.

The provision for pupil voice is exemplary. Pupils have many opportunities to be involved in decision-making and to perform leadership roles. Senior leaders provide worthwhile opportunities for pupil groups to contribute purposefully to the strategic direction of the school. Consequently, pupils become active citizens who know that their contributions are valued and important. For example, the Coach (creating opportunities for activity, confidence and health) group promotes health and wellbeing across the school. Recently, as part of their work to improve pupils' wellbeing, the group identified potential improvements to the way the learning environment supports group work and interventions. As a result, teachers and pupils now use the learning bays more effectively.

The school's relationship with parents is highly effective and very productive. There are extensive opportunities for parents to engage with the school, which help them to support their children's learning very effectively at home. For example, pupils share a flexible menu of homework options with their parents. This ensures that homework fits well into family life, and is well matched to individual pupils' interests and learning styles. There is a wide range of parent support programmes and informal community activities that make parents feel welcome in school. For example, the World Wide Mums group supports parents of pupils who learn English as an additional language to engage with their children's learning. The parents share their own skills, for instance in traditional cookery, and share their expertise in their home language with the staff. This helps the staff to communicate better with pupils new to English.

The school provides an extensive range of extra-curricular clubs. There are valuable opportunities for all pupils to develop their creative skills through the curriculum and also through extra-curricular activities such as dancing. In addition, all pupils have very good opportunities to participate in performances, for instance in the highly regarded school choir and the eistedfodd.

Leaders promote all aspects of healthy living very effectively. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to take part in physical activities, and strong arrangements to support healthy eating and drinking. For example, pupils have the opportunity to buy healthy snacks at break time and run a daily mile. These help pupils to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to make choices that are likely to benefit their health.

The school knows its pupils very well and identifies their needs through a comprehensive range of assessments. These inform the highly effective tracking system, which teachers use very efficiently to ensure that every pupil makes at least good and steady progress towards his or her challenging targets. In addition, effective pupil learning reviews provide regular, highly valuable opportunities for teachers to support pupils to build their resilience and develop strategies to retain a positive attitude to learning.

The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is exemplary. All pupils with additional learning needs have detailed and helpful individual development plans, which include measurable and challenging targets. Pupils and parents review these termly, together with staff. In addition, a wide range of highly effective, bespoke intervention programmes match learners' needs very well. For example, equine therapy provides pupils with opportunities to improve their physical and social skills alongside their confidence and wellbeing. Where appropriate, well-trained staff seek

prompt advice and support from specialist professionals, for instance in child mental health. As a result, pupils with additional needs make very strong progress from their starting points.

The school is proactive in promoting good attendance, and tracks pupils' attendance thoroughly. Leaders reward those pupils with high or improved attendance. Family liaison officers support many families to reduce absenteeism successfully, for example through making home visits. As a result, many families understand that pupils make the best progress when they attend school regularly. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school's programme of collective worship plays an important part in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, leaders link topical events to the school's approaches to learning behaviours and wellbeing skilfully. There are highly worthwhile opportunities for pupils to reflect and consider how to apply them to their own lives.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The headteacher is an exceptional leader. He has a clear vision for the school that ensures that all pupils have access to a high quality education, develop strong standards of wellbeing and become lifelong learners. He places a strong emphasis on the school's mission to excite, challenge and empower all pupils and staff. This is at the heart of the work of the school and creates a highly effective learning community.

Members of the leadership and support team work exceptionally well together and share the headteacher's values and aims. They have an extensive range of skills and expertise and have clear roles and responsibilities. The school takes a flexible approach to leadership, for example changing responsibilities to meet priorities such as preparing for the new digital competence framework. Senior leaders are good role models for staff and pupils. They help to develop leadership skills in both adults and pupils, in and beyond the school. For instance, teachers who have been leaders at the school have developed the skills and experience necessary to take up senior leadership roles at other schools, and teaching assistants within the school have furthered their careers by training to become teachers.

The school pays exceptional attention to national priorities, such as reducing the impact of deprivation on vulnerable pupils and school-to-school working. The way that the school collaborates with other schools is exemplary. Leaders have a strong moral conviction of their responsibility to contribute to improving the education system across the region and more widely for all learners, as a pioneer school and a training provider for the consortium. For example, leaders share their highly successful pioneer work in developing an innovative curriculum widely with other professionals. This also provides exemplary leadership development opportunities for staff at the school.

Members of the governing body support the school very effectively. They discharge their statutory roles well. They meet regularly with school leaders and staff, and hold termly meetings that focus specifically on evaluating the progress that the school makes. Governors know and understand the areas that the school needs to improve, such as attendance.

Leaders ensure that self-evaluation processes and improvement planning is carried out in a highly effective manner. The school has an excellent understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Staff use rigorous and extensive first hand monitoring information to identify key areas for improvement accurately. Pupils' opinions and ideas are important to school leaders, who consider them seriously as part of the whole school self-evaluation process to drive improvements. For instance, pupils' views on homework led to a change in the way it is organised in key stage 2.

The comprehensive development plan derives directly from the self-evaluation process. Leaders identify areas that need to improve quickly, and put in place effective strategies to address these. For example, they provide high quality mentoring and support to teachers who have been absent from school during periods of rapid change, to ensure that their practice reflects new developments. Over time, leaders have a very strong record in sustaining high quality provision across the school.

An outstanding feature of the school's leadership is the rich opportunities that it provides for staff to develop professionally. The strong focus on professional learning and action research reflects the very high priority leaders place on developing the knowledge and skills of all staff in their relentless quest for improvement. For example, staff are organised into triads across the school, to use up-to-date educational research to improve their own teaching. They focus on making the research theory work successfully in their classrooms. All staff share their findings in a showcase event. As a result, teachers have many worthwhile opportunities to improve their own professional practice.

The school makes very good use of its high quality learning environment. Staff and pupils use the extensive outdoor areas highly effectively to support play and learning. For example, sessions in the school's forest area help pupils to use their numeracy skills and develop mathematical vocabulary in purposeful real life contexts.

School leaders and governors manage resources highly effectively for the benefit of pupils, including income that school leaders and staff generate. Spending, including for example the pupil development grant, links tightly to the school's priorities. Staff monitor the impact of intervention programmes and initiatives very well, to ensure that they provide good value for money and have an extremely positive impact on pupil outcomes.

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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