



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

A report on

**Glyncorrwg Primary School
Bridge Street
Glyncorrwg
Port Talbot
SA13 3BB**

Date of inspection: January 2020

by

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

About Glyncorrwg Primary School

Glyncorrwg Primary School is in Neath Port Talbot local authority. There are 90 pupils on roll, including 17 nursery pupils who attend part-time. There are four mixed-age classes.

The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the past three years is around 25%. This is above the average for Wales of 18%. The school has identified around 22% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is around the national average of 21%. Nearly all pupils are white British and speak English at home.

Glyncorrwg Primary School, along with Cymer Afan, Croeserw and Pen Afan Primary Schools, is part of the Upper Afan Valley Federation of Schools, which formed in September 2013. The federation was previously one of five schools, but reduced to four primary schools after the closure of Cymer Afan Comprehensive School in July 2019.

The headteacher of the federation took up the post in September 2019; he had been the primary phase leader since 2013. Each primary school has a lead learner who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school.

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

Glyncorrwg Primary School is a welcoming and inclusive community, where staff place a strong emphasis on pupils' wellbeing. From a young age, pupils' behaviour is excellent and they show a high level of mutual respect to their peers, adults and visitors. Teachers plan a stimulating curriculum for pupils that engages their interests well. The effective working relationships between pupils and staff creates a positive atmosphere for learning where pupils feel comfortable to contribute without being afraid of making mistakes. This results in most pupils making appropriate progress from their starting points. However, the standard of teaching is inconsistent, and there is often a lack of challenge in learning activities. This means that pupils, especially those that are more able, do not always make the progress they could and, in general, pupils do not have strong independent learning skills.

Since the establishment of the federation of primary schools in September 2019, the headteacher, with the support of staff and governors, has made the wellbeing of pupils the top priority. This is evident in the care support and guidance afforded to pupils across the federation of schools. The federation's leaders are beginning to establish a culture of collaboration and sharing which benefits the wellbeing of staff and pupils. This culture sets a positive tone for the work in each of the federation's schools. However, school leaders have not ensured that standards of teaching and learning experiences are consistently good in all of the schools within the federation. Self-evaluation processes and arrangements to share best practice in teaching and in provision for skills are at an early stage of development.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve teaching and learning so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable
- R2 Improve provision to develop pupils' literacy skills
- R3 Develop pupils' independent learning skills, including their capacity to reason, solve problems and improve their own work
- R4 Strengthen the contributions of leaders at all levels, across the federation, particularly to evaluation and improvement work

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

Around a half of pupils start school with skills that are lower than expected for their age. Overall, most pupils make appropriate progress from their individual starting points, although their progress over time is inconsistent. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets. However, pupils who are more able do not always achieve as well as they could. Most pupils do not have strong enough thinking and problem solving skills. This limits their ability to be inquisitive learners that question and challenge their own thinking.

Throughout the school, nearly all pupils have effective listening skills, showing courtesy and respect to adults and peers when they are speaking. In nursery, many make effective progress from their starting point and communicate their feelings well. They use simple sentences correctly to discuss their activities, such as when finding different animals in the outdoor area. Overall, many pupils make steady progress in their speaking skills as they move through the school and use subject-specific vocabulary accurately when discussing their work. However, a minority of pupils do not have a rich enough vocabulary or extend their sentences well enough. This hinders their ability to express and explain their ideas clearly.

Most pupils show enthusiasm towards the Welsh language and enjoy learning and using new Welsh patterns. In the foundation phase, most are beginning to use the language successfully as part of their daily routines such as when discussing the weather or their feelings. The recent focus on the use of Welsh across the federation has ensured that most pupils in key stage 2 are beginning to make sound progress in developing their speaking skills.

In the foundation phase, many pupils have a secure understanding of individual letter sounds and use this knowledge appropriately to build unfamiliar words. However, a minority do not have strong enough phonetical knowledge, for example to recognise sound blends in words. By Year 2, many pupils read familiar texts fluently and discuss the content of their stories suitably, although they do not always develop a love of reading that enables them to choose to read for pleasure. As pupils move through key stage 2, their progress in reading accelerates and generally, many pupils make effective improvements in their reading skills. Many are beginning to apply these skills appropriately across the curriculum, for example when researching information on the difference between rich and poor people in the Tudor period. Most pupils also read familiar Welsh books with appropriate pronunciation and understanding.

Many pupils' early writing skills are developing soundly. By Year 2, a majority write simple sentences competently, using an appropriate range of punctuation and vocabulary. In key stage 2, many pupils plan and write in a suitable range of writing styles. Overall, they have legible handwriting and present their work neatly. By Year 6, many use paragraphs correctly to convey the main ideas in their writing, for example when writing a letter home as an evacuee during World War 2. However, pupils' ability to write creatively, using a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures to enrich their work, is underdeveloped. With adult support, many pupils write suitably in Welsh.

Across the school, most pupils make appropriate progress in developing their numeracy skills. In reception, many create patterns using two and three criteria successfully. By Year 2, most use a Venn diagram competently to sort different types of dinosaurs according to set criteria. They measure dinosaurs accurately to the nearest centimetre and sort them according to their size. By Year 6, most use their knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division suitably to solve number problems. When given the opportunity, many pupils apply their skills purposefully across the curriculum. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils create a scaled diagram to show how they would use the school grounds to create an allotment using area and perimeter accurately to calculate the use of different spaces. Overall, across the school, pupils do not always apply their numeracy skills to the same level across the curriculum as they do in their mathematics lessons and their reasoning skills are underdeveloped.

In the foundation phase, many pupils use a suitable range of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment confidently to support their learning and their skills are developing appropriately. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 login to their own accounts independently and use an art programme to create a space picture. However, across the foundation phase they do not develop their ICT skills well enough when working independently across the areas of learning. In key stage 2, pupils build on their ICT skills suitably such as when creating an interesting information leaflet about teeth using a word-processing package. Pupils' progress accelerates towards the end of key stage 2 and many older pupils use and apply a range of ICT skills effectively to support their learning across the curriculum. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils use spreadsheets and create a formula correctly to find the total number of warships that sank during World War 2.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

The behaviour of nearly all pupils across the school is exemplary. They are polite and courteous, and treat their friends, staff and visitors with respect. In nursery, for example, nearly all pupils settle quickly into daily routines, sharing resources and working co-operatively with their friends. Many older pupils act as valuable role models to younger pupils and show high levels of care towards them, for example when digital wizards support younger pupils to access ICT programmes.

Nearly all pupils feel happy, safe and secure in school and are confident that adults will listen to their concerns and deal with their problems quickly. Most have an appropriate understanding of what they need to do to keep themselves safe and show a suitable understanding of safety online. They have a sound understanding of their own rights as children with the Rights Ambassadors leading weekly whole school assemblies to promote these rights successfully.

Most pupils have an effective understanding of the importance of healthy eating and drinking. Pupils in the foundation phase talk confidently about the need to make healthy food choices such as when planning a healthy picnic basket for Little Red Riding Hood. Many pupils recognise the benefits of physical exercise and participate enthusiastically in daily 'Wake-Up, Shake-Up' sessions. The Sports Ambassadors play an active role in developing and encouraging pupils to take part in physical activities during break-times, and in leading playground games successfully.

Pupils are keen to take on leadership roles and responsibilities from a young age. In the foundation phase, the 'Helpwr Heddiw' (Today's Helper) leads daily Welsh activities enthusiastically and helps with other roles around the classroom during the day. Most pupils take their roles and responsibilities as part of pupil voice groups conscientiously. For example, the mini police promote safe parking outside the school gates. The 'Cryw Cymraeg' promote Welsh language development effectively. They have introduced worthwhile initiatives that have a positive impact on pupils' Welsh speaking skills as well as their enthusiasm towards learning the language.

Nearly all pupils settle quickly into their lessons. They listen attentively and sustain high levels of concentration. Many pupils engage in their learning and complete tasks set for them well. Many move from one task to another seamlessly and follow instructions effectively. Nearly all older pupils show perseverance and determination to complete and succeed in challenging tasks, such as when interrogating databases about planets to solve mathematical problems. However, overall, pupils' ability to work independently and make choices in relation to their learning is underdeveloped.

Many pupils are tolerant towards others and work very well in pairs or groups. They are enthusiastic when talking about their school and work. They form strong, positive relationships with staff and other pupils that helps create a nurturing environment. They engage extremely well with teachers and other adults and, as a result, are confident when responding to questions and following instructions.

Attendance over time is consistently good and nearly all pupils arrive promptly at the start of the school day.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Teachers plan collaboratively across the federation and this helps them to ensure pupils receive a broadly equitable range of learning experiences. Teachers use published schemes of work appropriately to support them with ideas for curriculum topics and learning activities. Overall, they plan relevant experiences for pupils across the breadth of the curriculum, which they enjoy.

Teachers enhance the curriculum effectively with a range of educational visits and visitors that they use to enthuse pupils and to make learning interesting. For example, the visit to the manor house at Llancaiach Fawr helped pupils to understand more about life in Tudor times.

The school uses national skills frameworks for literacy, numeracy and digital competence suitably when planning their curriculum topics. Recently, teachers have started to plan a few stimulating projects that enable pupils to consolidate and develop a range of skills across the curriculum. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils planned a wedding banquet for Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. This project enabled pupils to research information about foods for the rich during Tudor times so that they could plan, design and budget for a banquet meal. Pupils applied their literacy and numeracy skills well to measure and make decorations, create wedding invites and menus. However, teachers do not plan enough purposeful opportunities like these for pupils to extend and apply their literacy and numeracy skills effectively in a range of relevant contexts in other subjects across the curriculum frequently enough. Overall, there is not a clear strategy for ensuring

progression in pupils' skills development over sequences of lessons or over time. As a result, teachers do not always ensure that lessons build systematically on pupils' previous achievements and, on occasions, this leads to repetition of work at a similar standard across year groups.

Provision for nursery pupils entering the school is well structured and helps ensure that they settle quickly, learn daily routines and are eager to learn. Beneficial activities ensure that pupils develop effective speaking, listening and social skills quickly on entry. Across the foundation phase, teachers plan an appropriate range of tasks under the direction of an adult and opportunities for pupils to consolidate their skills at a simple level across the areas of learning. However, activities in these areas do not provide enough challenge for pupils to apply and develop a wide range of skills at the appropriate level. Although teachers plan a range of activities for pupils to develop their skills in the outdoors, such as when building shelters for animals, there are not regular enough opportunities for them to explore and experiment freely in independent and challenging activities.

Provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills is developing well. This is beginning to improve their confidence in using the language in less formal situations and is supporting them to make suitable linguistic progress as they move through the school.

One of the strengths of the teaching is the effective working relationships that exist between pupils and staff. This creates a positive atmosphere for learning and an environment where pupils feel comfortable to contribute, knowing that it is fine to make mistakes so that they can learn from them. However, there is a lack of consistency in the standard of teaching across the school. In a few instances, lessons have clear aims and success criteria with activities that engage the pupils' interest well. Teachers question pupils skilfully throughout the lesson to assess their progress and intervene beneficially to deepen their understanding of difficult concepts. Where teaching is less effective, adults over-direct activities. This limits opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills and make choices in their learning. Too often, teachers do not plan activities well enough to challenge pupils to achieve at the level they should, especially those who are more able. At times, teachers do not always have strong enough subject knowledge or a robust enough understanding of progress in terms of pupil skills.

The quality of feedback to pupils to enable them to reflect on and improve their own work is underdeveloped. In a few classes, teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have learned by assessing against set success criteria. However, overall, feedback does not help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a welcoming and inclusive community that supports its pupils well through its friendly and nurturing environment. Staff have high expectations of pupils in terms of their behaviour and there is a strong emphasis on encouraging them to take care of each other. This creates a calm learning environment where there is a strong sense of mutual respect between adults and pupils. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Staff create valuable opportunities to build and sustain effective working relationships with parents. They use a wide range of communication methods, such as social media and newsletters, as well as face-to-face communication to provide useful information to parents and families. Parents benefit from attending the informative workshops and, as a result, feel more confident in supporting their child's learning at home. For example, teachers arrange play based sessions for the parents of pupils in nursery to share useful strategies and ideas with them that they can use to support their children at home.

The school has comprehensive systems in place for monitoring and tracking pupil progress. Staff make beneficial use of this information to identify individual pupils who need extra support. This enables them to support pupils purposefully with a wide range of interventions such as to develop their early speaking skills. As a result, pupils who receive these interventions generally make good progress towards their targets. However, tracking systems are not always used robustly enough to enable staff to provide an appropriate level of challenge for all groups of pupils, especially those who are more able.

There is effective provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers use targets from individual learning plans purposefully in lessons to tailor work to match pupils' individual needs. The school has valuable partnerships with other agencies that provide staff with specialist support and advice. As a result, the school provides individuals with worthwhile support, according to their needs. Close working relationships with the Flying Start provision on the school grounds enable staff to identify and plan for pupil needs as they start school.

The school has effective arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking. For example, staff support the school's sports ambassadors successfully to promote active playtimes and lead physical activities during break times.

The school provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to contribute to school life through a wide range of pupil groups such as play heroes, digital wizards and sports ambassadors. There are beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop leadership roles from a young age and play an active role in making decisions and influencing school life. For example, following a visit by Welsh Water, staff worked with the eco committee to set up a 'Save Our Water' campaign to encourage pupils to use less water in school and at home.

There are valuable opportunities to develop pupils' social skills. For example, a residential visit to Margam Park for older pupils enabled pupils to work on challenging problem-solving activities together. This had a positive impact on their social skills as well as their self-esteem.

The provision to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. For example, during assemblies, teachers and pupils discuss the school's value of the month and relate it to how pupils show care and support to others in the playground. There are many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to make valuable contributions to community life through visits to the local church and Noddfa to provide coffee mornings and concerts.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

Since taking up overall leadership of the federation in September 2019, the headteacher has worked successfully to develop a shared vision for ensuring the wellbeing and nurture of pupils across the federation. This vision includes a commitment to meeting the physical, social and emotional needs of pupils. This work is effective and ensures that all the schools benefit from a calm atmosphere where pupils behave well and engage with their learning positively.

The vision to promote collaboration between the schools is developing well and is becoming influential in a number of ways. These include shared planning, consistent approaches to safeguarding pupils and common approaches to financial management. The developing culture of sharing is beneficial for staff and pupils. For example, it ensures that pupils receive a similar range of learning experiences and leads financial efficiencies so that events such as educational visits are viable and affordable.

In addition to the headteacher, there is a senior member of staff in each school. These members of staff undertake the role of lead learners. They take day-to-day responsibility for the leadership of school sites in the absence of the headteacher. In addition, they lead and monitor curriculum planning for pairs of year groups across the federation. This is beneficial in promoting shared working and building a team ethos. However, as a result of their focus on leading specific age groups across the federation, in too many cases lead learners do not have a strong enough understanding of the quality of provision or the standards and progress of pupils in their own schools. In a few instances, lead learners have made valuable contributions to the professional skills of colleagues, for example by ensuring consistent use of the foundation phase profile when pupils join each school and by raising the profile of the Welsh language across the federation.

School leaders gather considerable amounts of pupil progress information in an electronic tracking system. The headteacher uses this and other information, for example evidence from learning walks, to identify a few appropriate areas for improvement across the federation. These include the need to improve pupils' Welsh language skills. However, the headteacher and lead learners do not always consider other first-hand evidence well enough, such as the range and quality of work in pupils' books and in lessons when evaluating provision and standards. Consequently, leaders do not always identify important shortcomings in pupils' skill development or opportunities to improve teaching and learning experiences well enough. Over time, leaders have not drawn well enough on examples of highly effective teaching and learning that exist within the federation to improve professional practice and raise standards. Overall, the federation does not have a clear strategy to improve teaching in all schools. This limits the standards that pupils achieve.

There is effective co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs. Each school has an effective leader for special educational needs provision. They have developed a strong culture of sharing practice, resources and practical advice. This benefits teachers and support staff well and ensures that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Professional learning opportunities for teaching assistants are beneficial. They ensure that these members of staff have the skills to support pupils to progress through a range of useful intervention strategies. This is particularly valuable in enhancing nurture provision for pupils.

Governors aspire to provide high standard of education in the Upper Afan Valley. They provide appropriate support and challenge to the federation's leaders, for example in relation to the allocation of funding from budget to each of the schools. They know the federation's priorities for improvement and have suitable processes in place to monitor progress towards these goals. For example, governors look at pupils' work and take part in learning walks. They contribute appropriately to the developing culture of shared working, for example by supporting the federation to develop shared policies and processes for safeguarding.

School leaders allocate funding appropriately to support school improvement. They make suitable use additional funding from the pupil development grant to fund staff and intervention programmes to improve pupils' wellbeing and basic skills.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

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

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

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

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

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

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

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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