



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

A report on

Gladstone Primary

**Whitchurch Road
Heath
CF14 3JL**

Date of inspection: November 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Gladstone Primary

Name of provider	Gladstone Primary
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Not applicable
Number of pupils on roll	220
Pupils of statutory school age	150
Number in nursery classes	47
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 23.0%)	30.2%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary 16.1%)	7.3%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	61.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	24/04/2014
Start date of inspection	21/11/2022
The school is in the middle of extensive restoration work on the school building, which restricts the use of the school's outdoor areas considerably.	

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Gladstone Primary School is a caring and inclusive school, which encourages pupils to learn in a positive atmosphere and to be happy. Pupils enjoy the activities and tasks provided and use a wide range of strategies and resources to learn effectively. Pupils' readiness to learn during lessons is good and this is due to the purposeful working relationships that exist with their teachers and other staff.

Even though extensive restoration of the building restricts the use of the outdoors, the staff provide beneficial learning opportunities both indoors and in the open air. Where learning is particularly successful the teaching is engaging and purposeful and staff have high expectations of pupils. However, the quality of teaching and the impact of teachers' feedback on the next steps in pupils' learning is inconsistent across the school.

All staff provide a high level of support and care for pupils in all aspects of school life. This encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and well-being. Pupils' behaviour is very good, and they are determined to persevere and learn successfully. As a result, they develop strong literacy and digital skills across the curriculum; however, their application of numeracy skills in real life situations is underdeveloped.

The headteacher provides effective and purposeful leadership. She is determined to succeed for the benefit of pupils and the community. The senior leadership team, the staff and the governors share a clear vision. They work together well to ensure that the school is an inclusive learning community that promotes positive opportunities for pupils.

The headteacher shares responsibilities effectively among staff. This creates a positive whole-school focus, where staff and pupils feel valued for their contributions to school life. Leaders evaluate the school's work to plan for improvements thoroughly, using robust self-evaluation processes. These monitoring practices lead to worthwhile training for staff to develop their skills through effective professional learning opportunities.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that teachers use learning time effectively, in all classes, to challenge pupils and support their progress
- R2 Ensure that teachers improve provision to develop pupils' numeracy skills
- R3 Ensure that the quality of teachers' feedback targets the next steps in pupils' learning consistently across the school

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils enter the school with skills, especially language skills, which are below the expected levels for their age. During their time at school, most pupils make good progress, and they achieve well in their mathematics work and in developing their literacy and digital skills.

Most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) progress well in their learning. In all classes, pupils needing support access all areas of the curriculum purposefully. As a result, they make positive gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding from their starting points.

Most pupils progress well when speaking and listening and communicate effectively with each other and adults. As they move from nursery to Year 2, they ask and answer questions confidently while discussing tasks. For example, Year 1 pupils create digital messages in pairs to thank the local library for facilitating their recent visit. From Year 3 onwards, pupils progress strongly and use a good range of vocabulary and phrases in appropriate contexts. They engage well with peers and contribute willingly to discussions, for instance when reflecting on the devastation of the Cardiff Blitz in 1941.

Most pupils develop beneficial reading skills. Many of the youngest pupils learn the sounds of letters quickly and by Year 2, many pupils' reading skills are good. They attempt unfamiliar words using a variety of strategies confidently. By Year 6, most pupils read purposefully, and use their skills well when using a variety of different texts to support their learning. For example, they evaluate sensibly how Virginia Hall survived as a spy in the Second World War.

Many pupils develop effectively as writers. By Year 2, many pupils use punctuation and grammar accurately, such as when describing different types of houses in the local area. As pupils progress from Year 3 to Year 6, many write more independently in a wider range of genres. For example, Year 4 pupils script detailed instructions before filming how to create a fruit smoothie. Many pupils edit their work thoughtfully and use more sophisticated vocabulary to improve their final drafts. Their final pieces of work are generally of a good standard reflecting the positive progress they make from their individual starting points.

When speaking Welsh, most of the youngest pupils develop suitable vocabulary and respond to commands and greetings appropriately. By Year 2, many pupils use basic phrases confidently, for example to express their feelings or when discussing the weather. By Year 6, many pupils recall relevant sentence structures and vocabulary appropriately. As a result, most pupils develop satisfactory Welsh oracy skills.

By Year 2, many pupils use mathematical principles well. They use numbers confidently, collect information and record their results in simple tables and graphs. For instance, they create tally charts and bar graphs about their favourite animals. They also measure the length and breadth of different sized pictures of polar bears

with rulers and experiment with capacity when filling different sized containers with sand.

From Year 3 to Year 6, many pupils demonstrate sound mathematical skills. Older pupils develop effective strategies to multiply decimal numbers. They use data appropriately and present it effectively in various forms. For example, many pupils use line graphs to compare a range of extreme temperatures relating to disasters around the World. However, across the school, most pupils do not apply their numeracy skills consistently in real-life situations.

Most pupils have good digital skills, which they use across the curriculum successfully. For example, many younger pupils programme robots to travel from one farm animal to another on a grid and in Year 4 pupils create effective presentations on the wives of Henry VIII. Most older pupils manipulate text effectively, such as designing fact files on animals' mountain habitats and creating script-to-screen films based on Shakespearean characters. Additionally, many pupils populate databases and spreadsheets effectively, for example to record the amount of money they spend on electronic equipment.

Most pupils develop good artistic and creative skills. For example, the youngest pupils role-play happily at the mud kitchen and play musical instruments freely on stage. Across the school, most pupils embrace opportunities to experiment creatively, such as Year 5 pupils composing rock and roll dances from the 1950s. In all classes, most pupils develop effective thinking skills. They use purposeful strategies to accomplish tasks successfully, such as pupils in Year 3 collaborating on enterprise tasks to improve facilities in Roman baths.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

The relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. This enables nearly all pupils to engage in learning and to develop as confident contributors to school life. Most pupils show pride in their school and feel safe within its inclusive and caring ethos. They feel that adults in the school listen to their views carefully and take them into account when considering decisions that affect them.

Most pupils' behaviour is good. They are courteous and welcoming to adults and visitors. Most pupils show care and consideration for each other well. For example, pupils successfully lead the Gladstone Senedd and pupil voice groups across the school. The very few pupils who need help to manage their emotions benefit from the effective support they receive from staff.

Most pupils develop well as capable and ambitious learners. They have positive attitudes to learning, show good levels of interest in their work and talk enthusiastically about school life. Most pupils listen attentively to teachers and concentrate well on their work during lessons. They collaborate successfully in groups and in pairs, and many make positive contributions to class discussions. As a result, nearly all demonstrate a good level of respect for the contributions of others.

Most pupils draw on strategies to support their emotional well-being effectively. For example, older pupils discuss and explain sensibly how to approach difficult tasks

and how they build resilience in learning. Most younger pupils develop effective independent skills in activities, such as helping at snack-time.

Most pupils develop successfully as ethical, informed citizens. They are fair and caring in their dealings with others and demonstrate a very good knowledge of children's rights. For example, pupil voice groups, such as the Eco-Ninjas, make thoughtful decisions about active travel to school and litter collections in the community. As a result, nearly all pupils show a strong awareness of the importance of their contributions towards creating a caring society.

Most pupils participate willingly and express imaginative opinions when offering ideas about the school's curriculum. Most talk with enthusiasm about their lessons and all pupils have the opportunity to share their views and ideas on classroom grids before beginning their topics.

Nearly all pupils take an active part in the life of the school and the pupil voice groups are very inclusive. Their representatives demonstrate a range of good leadership skills. They fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and representatives are proud of their valuable contributions. This includes leading whole school assemblies on matters that are important to them, such as sustainability and saving energy.

Most pupils develop effective entrepreneurial and problem-solving skills. For example, pupils across the school collaborate effectively each year to make and sell products for the school fair. Pupil voice groups contribute considerably through social enterprise. For example, the community group leads the school effectively in fundraising for a range of charities, including the Lord Mayor of Cardiff's appeal. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of social and global concerns.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily. They understand the benefit of physical exercise on their health, such as participating in daily physical tasks. Most pupils have a secure knowledge of the importance of good physical and mental well-being. For example, pupils who participate in activities with Cardiff City Football Club and Glamorgan Cricket Club explain the importance of regular exercise effectively.

Nearly all pupils understand the need to be careful when using the internet, including the importance of using passwords safely. In discussions, nearly all pupils are keen to share what they learn about e-safety. This impacts positively on their well-being and general life skills.

Teaching and learning experiences

Across the school, teachers and support staff work well together to create a stimulating learning environment. All classrooms include high-quality displays to help pupils focus on their learning. Teachers use resources and the physical environment purposefully to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, the school uses an outside classroom effectively, which enables pupils to access outdoor learning during periods of inclement weather.

Teachers' planning encourages pupils to reflect on worldwide issues effectively. For example, their involvement in Global Handwashing Day and in raising money for

international charities. Teachers allow pupils to choose charities that supported them and their families on their arrival in Wales, which promotes inclusivity well. Staff encourage pupil groups effectively to promote sustainability within the school. For example, pupils' involvement in the International Walk to School Month led to them organising an 'Active Travel' initiative. This results in the Eco-Ninjas rewarding pupils with 'Wow badges' for walking to school.

The school provides a broad and balanced range of learning experiences that are in keeping with the philosophy and purpose of the Curriculum for Wales. Teachers' planning ensures that pupils have opportunities to advance their own enquiries linked to their projects innovatively. For example, Year 6 pupils visit the local cenotaph to research information and complete a database on local soldiers who fell during the Second World War.

Planning for the curriculum supports pupils' personal and social development well. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to work together and review their learning sensibly. Staff use curriculum resources effectively to provide personalised support for vulnerable pupils, such as those affected by social issues and trauma. Staff lead a very effective emotional well-being group, and their success in developing vulnerable pupils' skills is a strength of the school's provision.

The curriculum includes good opportunities for pupils to learn about the history of Black people in Wales. This includes Year 3 pupils learning about Betty Campbell and her role in developing diversity and inclusivity in schools in Cardiff. This has a positive effect on pupils' values and attitudes to each other.

Teachers and support staff help pupils make strong progress in their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in imaginative ways. For example, in Year 6 they dramatise a Second World War poem and record it using green screen backdrops. Teachers motivate pupils well to apply their digital skills effectively in a range of contexts, such as coding tasks and the interrogation of databases and spreadsheets. However, the provision for pupils to use their numeracy skills in their work across the curriculum are inconsistent and this limits the progress that pupils make in developing and using these important skills.

The curriculum includes effective opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales. For example, teachers ensure that pupils visit local sites of cultural interest, such as the Welsh Folk Museum to study the development of Welsh homes through the ages. Provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills is appropriate. The staff model a suitable range of greetings, instructions and questions in Welsh and its impact on pupils' Welsh oracy skills is satisfactory.

Teaching is generally good across the school. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and explain ideas with clarity. However, teachers do not always make best use of the time available in lessons to move pupils' learning forward. In these instances, pupils spend too much time on low level activity that does not support their progress well enough. Teachers make effective use of physical resources to support and challenge pupils. For example, the youngest pupils build tall towers and bridges with cardboard boxes and use outdoor adventurous equipment enthusiastically.

Teachers monitor pupils' progress effectively as they move through the school. They provide relevant opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning and that of their peers. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 respond well to reflection opportunities at the end of projects. However, the quality of teachers' oral and written feedback is inconsistent. Where it is effective, pupils are clear about what they need to do and how to improve their work. Teachers generally use praise well to support pupils. Where feedback is less effective, teachers do not explain well enough what pupils need to do to improve.

School reports to parents and carers provide detailed information about their child's progress and attitudes to learning. They also include useful targets to highlight the next steps for learning for individual pupils.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a very caring community, and staff encourage pupils to embrace and contribute to its supportive and friendly ethos. The positive relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are a strong feature of the school.

Teachers and support staff know how to support individuals and groups of pupils effectively and they respond with sensitivity to pupils' emotional and social needs. They utilise purposeful strategies and co-operative working techniques, to create a positive atmosphere around the school that enhances pupils' physical health and happiness. This supportive and warm ethos helps nearly all pupils to settle effortlessly into school life and it contributes significantly to their well-being. The staff's well-planned and thoughtful practices motivate pupils to develop resilient attitudes to their learning.

The provision for pupils identified as having ALN is thorough. The school's ALN co-ordinator works effectively in partnership with staff members to ensure that there is good identification, tracking and support for individuals and groups of pupils at an early age. Comprehensive pupil progress reviews result in staff members developing a deeper understanding of the needs of pupils. The school interacts beneficially with a range of specialist services to secure additional, timely resources and to offer specialist support to pupils with a range of academic, emotional and social needs. These arrangements ensure that most targeted pupils make good progress in relation to their abilities.

The school encourages pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to take on leadership roles effectively on a variety of purposeful groups. This provision broadens pupils' understanding of the importance of becoming active citizens within the school community. As a result, the school cultivates opportunities successfully for pupils to participate in making decisions to improve the school. For example, digital leaders advise other pupils in assemblies on the importance of internet safety. The active pupil voice at the school enables pupils to understand that they have rights as children and their actions, such as placing 'worry boxes' in classes, can make positive differences to pupils' lives.

The school has a beneficial range of opportunities that help pupils develop a good understanding of Welsh culture and heritage. For example, as part of celebrating St David's Day, pupils make traditional love spoons from clay. The school effectively

promotes aspects of Welsh traditions well, such as chairing the bard as part of its Eisteddfod celebrations. Older pupils study contemporary Welsh sporting icons, such as the cyclist Geraint Thomas, and their community project mural decorates the local cycle track. This type of effective provision encourages pupils to engage willingly with school life and to feel proud of the school's family ethos and its important role in the community.

The school places a strong emphasis on providing a rich and varied range of visits and visitors that support the curriculum and engage pupils in their learning. For example, these include studying local Welsh artists and studying knights and mythical dragons at Cardiff Castle. These effective experiences provide varied experiences in different aspects of Welsh history and the arts to develop pupils' cultural understanding well.

Staff enable pupils to make strong contributions to the life of their community. They use the experiences positively so that pupils develop respect for their own square mile and that they understand that caring for local people is important. For example, the younger pupils visit the lake at Roath Park and the seashore at Barry Island to learn about the seasons, water safety and the importance of caring for wildlife. The school also encourages pupils to support a local food bank through collecting donations from the community for their harvest festival. Additionally, following a visit to the school by representatives from the local hospice, older pupils visit its care centre to share their work on electronic tablets and to participate in yoga sessions with patients.

All staff understand their roles and responsibilities in contributing robustly to pupils' safety and well-being. They ensure that pupils' well-being and safety are prominent elements of school life. Leaders embed a culture of purposeful safeguarding processes among all staff and these practices are an integral part of their daily responsibilities. As a result, the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Additionally, the school has appropriate systems to monitor and improve attendance. Following the pandemic, rates of attendance dropped significantly. However, recent measures taken by the school have led to improvements.

Leadership and management

The headteacher works conscientiously with the senior leadership team, staff, pupils and parents to develop a shared vision and strong aspirations for the school. The school uses its motto 'Caring, Sharing and Learning Together' successfully to drive forward improvements in the school's practices.

The headteacher leads the school purposefully and ensures that all staff focus on developing a caring and inclusive environment, where all pupils and adults feel valued. She encourages behaviours and values that will support pupils in later life, such as respect, kindness and ambition. As a result, relationships throughout the school are positive and a shared commitment exists among staff to improve provision and learning across the school.

Staff have clear responsibilities and feel that they are an important part of the school's development planning. For example, they work in set teams to develop a

shared understanding when designing the school's overall curriculum. They also use different strategies well to evaluate pupils' progress in line with the needs of the school, such as tracking pupils' achievements from class to class.

Leaders use a range of purposeful monitoring activities to evaluate the school's strengths and areas for development. They collect a range of first-hand evidence to inform their views of the school systematically. These include the views of pupils and parents, and analyses of pupil progress data, such as different baseline data when pupils start school. Leaders use the findings from the self-evaluation processes, and consider external factors such as the pandemic, to develop the school's improvement plan effectively. As a result, the findings of leaders' monitoring leads to purposeful professional learning opportunities for staff to improve aspects of their teaching, such as planning topics based on pupils' interests.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They carry out their responsibilities effectively. They carry out their roles purposefully, for example to ensure rigour in the implementation of safeguarding practices, appropriate financial accountability and effective risk assessments during extensive building work at the school. They are diligent in keeping up to date with national priorities, such as ALN reforms. Link governors are assigned to each area of the curriculum and to designated responsibilities and hold the school to account sensibly. For example, they recognise the school's significant challenges in terms of developing pupils' language acquisition and support the targets to develop pupils' literacy skills as an important priority.

Governors have a detailed and comprehensive picture of the school gained through first-hand visits, talking to pupils, regular discussions with staff and informative reports from the headteacher. They liaise closely with senior leaders to ensure that there are suitable policies and procedures to promote the importance of healthy eating and drinking among pupils. As a result, governors contribute positive and well-balanced suggestions in moving the school forward.

Leaders and staff make good progress in their aim of maintaining pupils' use of the school grounds, particularly among the youngest children, during the extensive restoration of the school building. They have addressed accessibility issues to the best of their ability, which has allowed pupils opportunities to choose where and how they learn in the outdoors. As a result, nursery and reception pupils learn to experiment with saucepans when creating loud and quiet noises. Additionally, older pupils use technologies effectively to film around the school grounds, as part of learning about Welsh culture.

The headteacher and staff collaborate well with other schools and external partners, such as to plan for and implement the curriculum. Arrangements to promote professional development for all staff link well with the school's priorities for improvement. For example, leaders provide beneficial training opportunities to support teaching assistants' implementation of intervention strategies.

Parents are kept well informed of school developments, for example through the use of regular newsletters, a school app and the presence of staff at drop-off and pick-up times. As a result, parents feel that the school is a safe and caring family environment. Parents collaborate well to support new parents, who need language

support on arrival in Wales. Additionally, they appreciate how quickly leaders and staff respond to their concerns, and this is a positive feature of the school.

Leaders monitor the budget carefully and ensure that spending decisions are in line with the school's priorities for improvement, such as investments in an outdoor learning shelter. Leaders allocate resources in the classrooms effectively and use the pupil development grant wisely to provide specific interventions across the school, such as emotional coaching sessions for pupils.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer 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/carers 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' well-being, 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)

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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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Publication date: 27/01/2023