



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

A report on

Gladestry C.I.W. School

**Gladestry
Kington
Herefordshire
HR5 3NR**

Date of inspection: December 2023

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Gladestry C.I.W. School

Name of provider	Gladestry C.I.W. School
Local authority	Powys County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	40
Pupils of statutory school age	36
Number in nursery classes	0
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 23.7%)	
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 13.2%)	13.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	02/03/2015
Start date of inspection	04/12/2023

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

Gladestry Primary School is a happy and thriving learning community. Pupils enjoy school and make good progress as learners and in their overall development within the school's nurturing ethos. They are proud of their school and their achievements. Their behaviour is excellent and the care and respect they show for one another is exemplary. Pupils have a good level of influence over the life and work of the school, for example by creating and implementing the school's rules. Nearly all pupils develop and use their literacy, Welsh language, numeracy, digital skills well and use these effectively and enthusiastically across the broad range of learning experiences.

Teachers work well as a team and show a strong commitment to the school's improvement priorities, for example by developing their Welsh language skills to enable them to work more effectively with pupils. They establish and maintain caring, trusting and respectful relationships with pupils. They understand and meet pupils' needs well through engaging lessons, a broad and balanced curriculum and bespoke support where needed. Overall, teachers have high expectations for pupils' progress and plan sequences of lessons well to include appropriate levels of support and challenge. Teachers often use questioning and feedback successfully to move learning forward, particularly in the class for older pupils. Provision for the school's younger pupils develops many of their skills appropriately. However, adults tend to structure and guide most activities. They do not always provide enough opportunity for pupils to lead their own learning or to learn through play when indoors or outside. School leaders are aware of this.

The headteacher provides highly effective leadership. She understands the needs of the pupils, the staff and the community that the school serves very well. She has developed a powerful culture of collaboration within and beyond the school that ensures that the school meets these needs. The school currently works in a collaboration agreement with another local primary school. The headteacher leads both schools. This in combination with effective work with the local cluster of schools and highly beneficial partnerships with parents and a variety of external organisations brings many benefits. For example, they support the school to extend the range of experiences provided for pupils and enable staff to work productively with fellow professionals.

The headteacher, in partnership with pupils, staff, governors and the school community, maintains a clear focus on continually improving the school. Overall, she ensures that the school focuses on the right priorities at the right time. However, the school's work to improve provision for the younger pupils at the school is at an early stage of development.

Recommendations

R1 Improve the provision for younger pupils

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

During their time at school, nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) make good progress from their individual starting points.

Most pupils have good speaking skills and use these effectively, for example when presenting their interpretations of famous Welsh tales from Y Mobinogi. Younger pupils develop a sound understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds. From a very young age, they show an interest in books and stories and develop effective early reading skills. Older pupils read very well with confidence, fluency and understanding. They work out the meaning of challenging words using contextual clues and infer hidden meaning from the text effectively. They also draw upon the features of books, such as the blurb, to decide whether a book contains a story they might like to read. They use their reading skills well to support their learning across the curriculum, for example to analyse the qualities of different characters in *The Jungle Book*.

Nearly all pupils write for a range of purposes and audiences. For example, younger pupils adapt traditional tales successfully to create their own stories and prepare lists for recipes. They develop a sound understanding of the structure of different types of writing, such as lists and instructions. They present their work appropriately and use their understanding of sounds well to help them to spell unfamiliar words. Older pupils write well and with increasing sophistication. For example, they explore themes, such as migration from different points of view using a range of appropriate vocabulary. They organise their work well, spell familiar words accurately and use punctuation appropriately.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning Welsh and make good progress. They use a range of sentence patterns and vocabulary for example when discussing what they like about their current reading book. From a young age, they use Welsh regularly as part of their learning activities. For instance, younger pupils learn the Welsh names for two-dimensional shapes in mathematics sessions.

Across the school, most pupils progress well in developing their mathematical skills. Younger pupils learn about how numbers bond to make totals, they present number

sentences and develop suitable strategies to add and subtract. Older pupils have a secure understanding of place value and use the four rules of number well. They apply basic formulae effectively, for instance to solve problems when calculating area and perimeter. Most pupils apply their numeracy skills well across the curriculum, for instance to present and analyse data about the characteristics of passengers on the HMT Empire Windrush.

Most pupils use their digital skills effectively to support and present their learning. As they move through the school, they learn to save and retrieve their work efficiently and to use the features of apps and software with greater confidence and independence, for example to create code, databases and to produce presentations about their topic work.

Most pupils develop useful skills, knowledge and understanding in their work across the curriculum. For example, they learn how to carry out experiments in their science work and how to record, analyse and present their findings. In addition, they develop their expressive and creative skills successfully. For instance, many older pupils have an introduction to a variety of musical instruments. Most pupils develop their physical skills appropriately in planned physical education lessons and extra-curricular clubs. However, due to the current provision, younger pupils do not always have opportunities to develop and use their physical skills as a natural part of their learning.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils enjoy school and flourish within its nurturing ethos. Standards of behaviour are excellent and the care and empathy that pupils show to each other is exceptional. Pupils trust and respect adults. They are confident that adults will listen to any concerns they have and provide them with help when they need it.

Rates of attendance are high and pupils engage with learning experiences enthusiastically. Nearly all pupils settle to tasks quickly and sustain concentration for appropriate periods to complete their work. They collaborate well with their peers, for example to produce poetry or digital presentations. They also provide valuable support to one another during learning activities.

Nearly all pupils respond well to feedback, particularly when they receive this during learning activities. For example, in response to challenge, older pupils refine word choices to improve the quality of their writing. During their time at school, pupils develop a sound understanding of their strengths and understand what they need to do to improve as learners. They embrace challenge, for example when asked to include more complex features in their digital presentations, and generally apply their skills with appropriate levels of independence as they move through the school. However, due to the way that learning is organised in the class for younger pupils, they miss out on opportunities to make choices about how and what they learn.

Pupils understand the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. They make healthy food choices. For instance, they eat fruit at break times and participate enthusiastically in a range of sporting activities in lessons. Many pupils take advantage of additional opportunities to be active after school by joining in with traditional sporting activities. They are proud to represent their school in local sporting tournaments.

Through their curriculum work, pupils learn about important sustainability issues, for example by learning about the negative implications of single use plastic. Nearly all pupils show a good understanding of issues associated with diversity. They recognise that people have different characteristics and that these should be respected and celebrated. They develop a strong awareness of their rights as children and demonstrate this understanding, for example by developing and working in accordance with their child friendly version of the school's safeguarding policy.

Pupils have appropriate influence over the life and work of the school. For example, they have developed school rules and set out consequences for not abiding by these rules. They ensured that all pupils and governors approved of the rules before implementing them. Groups such as the School Council, the Eco Gang and the Criw Cymraeg undertake their roles diligently, for example by leading Welsh language assemblies and arranging charity fundraising events.

Teaching and learning experiences

Teaching and learning experiences support nearly all pupils to make good progress and to develop positive attitudes as learners during their time at school. Working relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good. They underpin the positive working culture at the school and act as a gateway to learning.

Leaders and staff have worked well to develop a broad, balanced, relevant and engaging curriculum based a series of themes such as 'Journeys' and 'Curiosity'. They ensure that older pupils, in particular, have opportunities to influence the ways in which these topics develop. Teachers also plan sequences of lessons carefully to ensure that pupils develop their literacy, numeracy, digital and Welsh language skills progressively in accordance with agreed and appropriately high expectations.

Teachers plan effective opportunities for pupils to learn about their locality, Wales and the wider world. For example, younger pupils explore the village and its surrounding during 'welly walks'. They learn about the history of their village and explore the nature within their square mile, often observing the seasonal changes around them. A wide range of visits to places of interest such as to King Arthur's Labyrinth in Machynlleth broaden their understanding of the culture, history and heritage of Wales. School based activity develops this understanding further. For instance, pupils learn about Welsh folklore through studying tales from Y Mabinogi.

Through their topic work, pupils learn about the wider world. For instance, they learn about migration and compare life in Wales with life in other countries. They consider the contributions black servicemen and women made to the British armed forces during times of war. In addition, pupils learn about festivals including Chinese New Year and Diwali. This work contributes appropriately to pupils' understanding of diversity within Wales and the world.

Teachers enhance the curriculum well with a variety of trips and by bringing specialist visitors to the school. For example, recent workshops supported pupils to learn about first aid, lifesaving techniques and introduced them to British Sign Language.

Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and this enables them to tailor their teaching to address the wide range of pupils' needs. Generally, teachers have

appropriately high expectations for pupils' progress. They keep this progress under review in learning sessions and use questioning effectively to move learning forward. There is a clear approach to providing feedback that pupils understand and respond to well. However, in a very few instances, pupils are not clear about the purpose of their learning and how it fits in with what they have learned before or how it will contribute to their progress in the future.

Teaching for younger pupils ensures that they build their skills progressively and generally matches the ethos of foundation learning appropriately. However, adults tend to guide pupils through tasks and pupils do not have enough opportunity to lead their own learning, to learn through play or to develop their physical skills, for example in the outdoor environment.

Teachers provide valuable information for parents in annual reports to ensure that they understand the progress their child is making and are aware of their next steps in learning.

Care, support and guidance

The care, support and guidance provided for pupils are a strength of the school. It promotes high levels of engagement in school life and ensures that pupils feel happy, safe and confident as members of the school community.

Provision for pupils with ALN is effective. The ALN co-ordinator works with adults in the school to help to tailor individual support for pupils. This includes useful intervention work provided by the school's teaching assistants. Where appropriate, the school involves the local authority and other stakeholders, such as speech and language therapists, to ensure that pupils have the support they need to address their individual needs. There are regular meetings with parents to review their child's progress and to amend plans and provision as appropriate.

The school places a strong focus on inclusion. Staff liaise with families before pupils start attending school so that they can understand and cater for their individual needs. From this, adults learn how to support individual pupils in a positive way so that school is an enjoyable experience for all.

Across the school, pupils have valuable opportunities to take up leadership roles. Staff support them to learn how to use their influence to represent others and to bring about positive change. These pupils play an active role in their school and consider ways in which they can contribute to their community and help the school to work sustainably.

Staff ensure that pupils understand they have rights and responsibilities as citizens and members of the school community. They provide valuable opportunities for pupils to exercise these rights to improve the school, for example by taking responsibility for developing the school's rules. Staff support pupils to develop their understanding of diversity, for example by challenging assumptions based on appearance and exploring differences in the composition of families. They enable pupils to understand and work in accordance with values such as trust, friendship and love. They consider these values and their purpose in their community and within the wider world, for example when exploring what true generosity is.

There are valuable opportunities for pupils to engage with local and Welsh culture, for example through visits to theatres to experience a live orchestra performing, a local cathedral and the Hay Book Festival. In addition, pupils benefit from visits to places that reflect popular culture such as, Harry Potter World.

The school uses outside providers effectively to support pupils' and provides opportunities to develop their sporting skills, such as rugby and netball. There are valuable opportunities to participate in sporting events and competitions, deepening their sense of achievement and pride in their school. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to take part in productions, such as concerts and plays, and performing these in front of an audience, for example at Christmas time.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding are robust and give no cause for concern. Strategies to monitor and secure good rates of attendance are effective.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides highly effective strategic and nurturing leadership. She has worked successfully with the school community to implement a vision for continuous school improvement and to establish a supportive culture where pupils thrive. This work supports nearly all pupils to make consistently strong progress as learners and to achieve good levels of well-being. The headteacher has developed a strong team ethos that all staff contribute to enthusiastically.

The school currently works in partnership with another local primary school through a collaboration agreement. The headteacher leads both schools and allocates her time equally between them. This partnership is strategic and effective. It provides access to a broader range of educational experiences for pupils, for example by making educational visits affordable and increases opportunities for staff to work collaboratively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Beyond this partnership the school also works proactively with the local cluster of schools. This work has included a shared and increasingly effective approach to implementing aspects of the Curriculum for Wales. Cluster work has also enabled the schools involved to agree shared expectations of pupils' progress, for example by setting out the digital skills and competencies pupils will need prior to joining high school.

Partnership work with parents is highly beneficial. Parents value opportunities to learn about or contribute to the school's work, for example by inviting pupils to visit a farm to learn about the importance of agriculture in the local community to further develop their sense of belonging. Parents also influence important aspects of the school's work, for instance by helping to design the format of the annual report that they receive about their child's progress. In addition, the Friends of Gladestry School (FROGS) raise valuable funds to enhance pupils' school experience.

Leaders ensure that staff understand and carry out their roles effectively. This includes appropriate opportunities for staff to develop leadership skills, for example when the headteacher is off site or to contribute to curriculum development work.

The school's evaluation and improvement processes are effective. The headteacher includes all staff in these processes and ensures that the school invests time, energy and resources to address the right priorities. This ensure that the school implements

change that is beneficial to pupils. For example, recent work to improve provision to develop pupils' Welsh language and mathematical skills has raised levels of pupils' progress.

School leaders address national priorities effectively. For example, they have developed their curriculum thoughtfully to ensure that it aligns with the principles and ethos set out in Curriculum for Wales. Leaders use professional learning opportunities and performance management processes well to support school improvement. However, professional learning has not focused on developing provision for younger learners. This means that the learning environment and the role of adults as enablers of learning is at an early stage of development.

Pupils contribute appropriately to whole school leadership, for example by developing their own safeguarding policy. This supports pupils to understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens within the school community.

Governors contribute well to the school's work. They are regular visitors to the school where they undertake monitoring activities to gain a first-hand understanding of progress against the school's improvement priorities. They use the knowledge to provide appropriate support and challenge to the school. They support leaders to monitor and use financial resources, including grant funding, diligently for the benefit of learners. Governors ensure that there are appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking and contribute well to the school's robust safeguarding culture.

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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