

A report on

Gowerton Primary School

The Elba Sport Complex

Ffordd Beck

Gowerton

Swansea

SA4 3GE

Date of inspection: January 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Gowerton Primary School

Name of provider	Gowerton Primary School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	361
Pupils of statutory school age	281
Number in nursery classes	45
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 22.9%)	11.5%
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 11.1%)	12.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.8%
Date of headteacher appointment	06/05/2024

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	25/09/2017
Start date of inspection	20/01/2025

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.

Summary

Gowerton Primary school is an inclusive and welcoming environment where all pupils are valued and supported well. Leaders have developed a strong culture of learning and teamwork among staff and pupils, ensuring that teachers collaborate effectively to create engaging and purposeful learning experiences. Staff are committed to meeting pupils' needs, enabling most to make good progress as they move through the school.

Leaders focus well on improving learning and well-being. This has led to positive change in areas, such as pupils' speaking and listening skills. Leaders generally identify strengths and areas for improvement appropriately, although their monitoring of learning and teaching is sometimes too narrow and does not focus well enough on identifying what pupils can do.

Teaching is well-paced and engages most pupils effectively. The school promotes pupils' independence and resilience highly successfully, for instance through carefully designed literacy and mathematics tasks, and using resources such as the communal 'learning street' area. However, in a few instances, pupils are not challenged sufficiently to make the progress that they could.

The curriculum reflects the local community thoughtfully, fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging pupils to reach their potential. It supports moral, spiritual, and cultural understanding well, but lacks sufficient focus on diversity.

Most pupils develop strong literacy and numeracy skills. In mathematics, teachers plan practical activities skilfully, reinforcing concepts effectively. While pupils' writing improves over time, opportunities to write more developed pieces across different genres are limited. Mathematics teaching is a strength. While younger pupils engage well with the Welsh language, most pupils' progress slows as they move through the school.

The school supports pupils with additional learning needs effectively through structured interventions and planning. Emotional and behavioural support is also strong. While staff-pupil relationships are nurturing, procedures for addressing occasional poor behaviour are not strong enough.

Recommendations

We have made three recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Strengthen policy and procedures for dealing with physical intervention measures
- R2 Improve the breadth and the focus of self-evaluation activities to provide a stronger picture of strengths and areas for improvement
- R3 Ensure that learning activities challenge all pupils more consistently

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

The school is an inclusive learning environment where all pupils are valued, welcomed and celebrated. Leaders have developed a strong culture of learning and teamwork amongst staff and pupils. As a result, teachers work together supportively and productively to develop a range of engaging and purposeful learning experiences for pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants share a commitment to meeting the needs of all. The well-considered support and guidance they give enables most pupils to make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils are respectful and supportive of each other, and work together supportively and positively. This is a particular strength of the school.

Leaders set a clear strategic direction that focuses well on improving pupils' learning and their well-being. They have a clear understanding of the need to identify areas for improvement, set in place strategies to address issues, and then evaluate actions to ensure that they have had a positive impact. As a result, many of the school's initiatives have brought about useful improvement, for example in improving pupils' speaking and listening skills, which are particularly effective. Most pupils communicate confidently in a range of situations.

In general leaders identify the school's strengths and areas that require improvement appropriately. They use a few monitoring tools, such as scrutinising the work in pupils' books, to help them evaluate teachers' feedback and its impact on pupils' learning. They evaluate actions in the school's improvement plan carefully. However, the current range of

monitoring activity is too narrow and does not always focus well enough on pupils' learning to ensure that leaders evaluate learning and teaching robustly.

Across the school, teaching and learning is well-paced and planned thoughtfully. Most teachers take worthwhile account of the range of needs in their class and provide activities that interest and engage most pupils well. In a few instances teachers' expectations, and the level to which they challenge pupils, do not always enable more able pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.

Spotlight: The school has successfully established carefully thought-out processes that, from an early age, promote pupils' independence, autonomy and choice in their learning. This is particularly apparent during carefully planned literacy and mathematics tasks. Staff make excellent use of the learning environment, such as the communal 'learning street' area, to enrich pupils' learning and provide them with learning experiences that develop their independence strongly. Through these experiences, pupils learn to become resilient, thoughtful and able to tackle challenges and difficulties confidently using a wide range of strategies. Most pupils organise themselves purposefully, work in pairs and small groups productively, and talk capably about a range of strategies they can use to support their independent learning and to help them when if they are stuck.

Leaders and staff have worked together effectively to develop a vision for the school's curriculum that is purposeful and meaningful, and reflects the context of its local community. There is a strong focus on fostering a sense of ownership and belonging, inspiring pupils to reach their full potential and contribute positively to the school and wider community.

Staff ensure that the curriculum develops pupils' spiritual moral and cultural understanding sufficiently to enable them to become empathetic and considerate towards others. The curriculum helps pupils to develop as confident individuals who have a greater awareness of the importance of healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe. However, the development of pupils' understanding of different relationships, such as those of LGBTQ+ people, is underdeveloped. Many pupils' understanding of the history and experiences of black, Asian and minority ethnic people is limited.

The school has established a systematic approach to the teaching of reading. Staff support the youngest pupils well to develop an early interest in books, helping them to begin to identify simple letters and words quickly. By the time they leave the school, most pupils read well and use these skills beneficially to support their wider learning. Teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills over time. As they move through the school, pupils begin to write for an appropriate range of purposes. However, they do not always have opportunities to write longer, more developed pieces in a wide

enough range of genre, and their use of correct punctuation and their presentation skills are underdeveloped.

The teaching of mathematics is strong. Across the school, teachers make effective use of concrete apparatus and practical activities to develop pupils' understanding of a wide range of mathematical concepts. Opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum are authentic, engage the interest of the learner and help pupils improve their skills helpfully.

Leaders are positive about improving the profile of the Welsh language in the school, however they do not focus well enough on ensuring that all teachers provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to hear and to speak the language. Staff in the younger classes model the Welsh language purposefully and this helps to establish pupils' early enthusiasm for using the language. However, as they move through the school, opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh oracy skills become less effective. Consequently, pupils do not make the progress they could by the time they leave the school.

Teachers provide pupils with useful opportunities to apply their skills independently in topic work. In the best cases, activities link purposefully to the school's curriculum, build successfully on pupils' prior knowledge and follow pupils' interests and curiosities. In a few cases, this work is not challenging or purposeful enough. Where this is the case, the activities do not enhance or deepen pupils' learning sufficiently.

In general leaders address national priorities, such as curriculum and additional needs reform, effectively. For example, leaders have developed highly beneficial practices and procedures to support pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). As a result, provision to support pupils with (ALN) is highly effective. Termly pupil progress meetings and weekly planning meetings to consider pupils' skills progression help teachers understand well the needs of all pupils, and in particular those with ALN. Leaders work with teachers and support staff closely to ensure that they have a strong understanding of how to support pupils with additional needs and adapt learning activities effectively. As a result, pupils make purposeful progress towards their individual targets.

The school has developed effective provision to help pupils who need individual support in areas, such as confidence building and behaviour management. This provision ensures that the needs of individual pupils are met well, supporting them to attend school positively.

The school has begun to develop appropriate procedures to monitor and address weak attendance, however, while attendance is slowly increasing, a few pupils do not attend regularly enough, and too many pupils arrive late each day.

The relationships between staff and pupils are warm and nurturing, providing an environment which encourages positive behaviour and confidence from pupils. There is a generally suitable culture of safeguarding at the school and all staff care for pupils considerately and thoughtfully. However, there are not sufficiently rigorous systems in place to ensure that staff understand how to intervene appropriately to deal with the very few instances of notably poor behaviour.

Governors have a strong understanding of the community that the school serves. They monitor finances carefully and support school leaders helpfully. They are beginning to develop a stronger understanding of the school and have a general understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development but not in enough detail to be able to question and challenge leaders purposefully enough.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils give cause for concern

The school's arrangements for site management do not give any cause for concern

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

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

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

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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