



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

A report on

Glan-Yr-Afon Primary

**Browing Close
Llanrumney
CF3 5NJ**

Date of inspection: May 2024

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Glan-Yr-Afon Primary

Name of provider	Glan-Yr-Afon Primary
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	None
Number of pupils on roll	150
Pupils of statutory school age	117
Number in nursery classes	17
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%)	73.3%
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%)	8.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	17.1%
Date of headteacher appointment	03/02/2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	02/11/2015
Start date of inspection	13/05/2024

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

Glan-Yr-Afon Primary School is part of the Rainbow Federation with nearby Bryn Hafod Primary School. They share an executive headteacher and a governing body. Both schools collaborate highly effectively to secure equity of provision across the federation. For example, staff work closely together to ensure that all pupils benefit from the same broad range of exciting learning experiences. In addition, staff from both schools have equal access to valuable opportunities for professional learning and to develop as effective leaders. This consistency impacts positively on the well-being and progress of pupils.

Staff build strong, positive relationships with pupils and their families. They set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and engagement with learning. They support pupils well to meet these expectations. The federation's curriculum provides a rich range of experiences that stimulate and motivate pupils successfully. As a result, most pupils engage with their learning enthusiastically and make good progress in developing a suitably broad range of skills and knowledge as they move through the school. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunity for pupils to use their numeracy skills purposefully in their wider learning.

Teachers take good account of pupils' previous learning to set clear goals for their progress. This supports pupils to feel confident in their work and to apply themselves readily. Teachers use questioning skilfully to monitor pupils' progress and to extend their learning beneficially. However, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunity for younger pupils to develop their skills independently through exploration and play.

Staff place a high emphasis on securing the safety and well-being of all pupils. They make well-planned provision to support pupils' emotional needs so that they feel happy and secure in school. The school provides valuable support for parents to develop their own skills and to help with their child's learning at home. For example, staff provide opportunities for parents of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) to meet informally with specialist teams and other parents to gain advice and share their experience. These opportunities are beneficial and strengthen the trust between staff and families.

Leaders provide clear and principled direction to the work of the school. They foster a strong team ethic that ensures all staff are aligned to the federation's goals and priorities. As a result, they have secured strong progress in key areas, such as developing the federation's curriculum, providing effective and coherent support for pupils with ALN and improving pupils' reading skills.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the quality of foundation learning provision
- R2 Improve opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in their wider learning

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to leading effective collaboration across the federation, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main evaluation

Learning

During their time in the school, many pupils make good progress and develop a broad range of skills, knowledge and understanding across the areas of learning and experience. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make good progress towards their individual targets.

Most pupils develop strong speaking and listening skills. Many have a well-developed vocabulary and are keen to learn and use new words in both English and Welsh. For example, younger pupils use specific words with precision when discussing whether the school should have a beehive or not. Most pupils listen attentively to adults and to each other. They allow other pupils time to speak without interrupting and respond to their thoughts appropriately. Most older pupils speak confidently and offer their opinions respectfully, for instance when deciding which materials are best to use to construct a model train.

Most pupils across the school show enjoyment in reading and develop their reading skills well. Most younger pupils have a good understanding of letter sounds and use this knowledge to help them read new and unfamiliar words successfully. They use a range of helpful strategies to make sense of the texts they read. Most older pupils read a variety of suitably challenging online and printed texts confidently. Many read with suitable expression, for instance to add emphasis or to convey a character's feelings more clearly. Most pupils enjoy being read to and show a good understanding of the books they share, making sharp observations and reflecting sensibly on what they hear. Many older pupils show a particular interest in specific authors and genres and explain their preferences clearly.

Most pupils make appropriate progress in developing their writing skills. The youngest pupils develop good pencil control and begin to form letters accurately. By Year 2, many pupils write at greater length, using capital letters and full stops correctly. They write for a specific purpose successfully, such as to describe how sunflowers grow. Most older pupils organise their writing appropriately. They use their knowledge of different genres to include relevant features and match the tone of their writing to their audience appropriately. In a minority of instances, pupils display creativity in their writing, for instance by using alliteration or powerful word choices for effect. Overall, however, many older pupils rely too heavily on the scaffolding provided by teachers, and this limits their freedom to express themselves more

imaginatively. A minority of older pupils do not always use punctuation accurately. Most pupils use helpful feedback to edit and improve their writing.

Most pupils make sound progress in developing their Welsh language skills. Most younger pupils respond with understanding to commands and instructions they hear in class. They begin to broaden their vocabulary and ask and answer a variety of simple questions confidently. Many older pupils use Welsh to share personal information readily. They extend their speech effectively, such as when describing how they will dress because of the weather. Where modelling by teachers is most effective, older pupils use negative forms and connectives to express their opinions effectively.

As pupils move through the school, most make good progress in developing their numeracy skills. The youngest pupils begin to order the characters from the story *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* by size and to work out simple number problems using more or less. By Year 2, most pupils use practical methods to support their thinking appropriately. For example, they use blocks and rulers to estimate and measure the size of a model beanstalk accurately. Many older pupils show good recall of basic number facts and use their understanding of place value to calculate efficiently, for instance by rounding and approximating sensibly. They use inverse operations to check their answers appropriately. When given the opportunity, pupils use their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum, for instance to calculate the distance food travels from the farm to the shop. Overall, however, pupils do not apply their skills often enough to solve worthwhile problems in their wider learning.

Most pupils develop a good range of digital skills. They use a variety of devices and platforms fluidly to support their wider learning beneficially. Many younger pupils programme digital toys confidently, showing an understanding of the need to sequence instructions logically. Older pupils build on this knowledge creatively to code simple games and to control animations. Most pupils use their digital skills to communicate effectively, for instance to research and present information that engages and informs the audience successfully.

Most pupils use their creative and expressive skills to enhance their wider learning well. For example, the youngest pupils make puppets to explore how emotions can be expressed through storytelling and performance. Older pupils role-play as child labourers, empathising imaginatively with the harsh conditions experienced by mine workers during the Industrial Revolution. Across the school, most pupils draw inspiration from a range of artists to create their own art works, often emulating the style and techniques they have studied effectively.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their physical skills. Most younger pupils handle tools and manipulate small objects with suitable dexterity. Many use play equipment confidently, taking appropriate risks and building their core strength and balance beneficially. Older pupils extend these skills in PE lessons to develop their ball-handling skills and teamwork effectively.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Most pupils enjoy attending school and value the care and nurture that staff provide. They have a good understanding of the school's rules, rewards and sanctions, and

how these are relevant to their conduct and safety beyond the school. The consistent respect and fairness that most pupils show to each other, staff and visitors is a strength of the school. Most pupils collaborate well during lessons and play together pleasantly at break and lunchtimes, for instance when participating in the Welsh language games led by the Criw Cymraeg.

Most pupils believe that staff listen to their views and take them into account when considering decisions that affect them. They know whom to approach if something is worrying them. Pupils take advantage of a variety of effective strategies that support their emotional well-being, such as working with 'Skully' the school dog or continuing their learning in the 'Cwtch' intervention facility. As a result, most pupils develop as happy and confident individuals. Most pupils understand the importance of keeping safe, including online. For example, they know that not all information on the internet is trustworthy and that personal details need to be protected.

Most pupils have a positive attitude to learning. They concentrate well in lessons and demonstrate good levels of interest in their work. Many older pupils persevere when faced with an unfamiliar situation or challenge. Most pupils make positive contributions to class discussions and listen carefully to staff and to the contributions of their peers when working in pairs or groups. Most pupils contribute effectively to the planning of topics in class by sharing what they want to know and how they would like to learn.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily. They know the benefit of eating fruit and vegetables and enjoy the healthy snacks offered to them at breaktimes. Most pupils participate enthusiastically in the regular opportunities to develop their physical skills in lessons and at break and lunch times. For example, older pupils enjoy playing alongside their peers to develop their skills in regular sessions led by coaches from Cardiff City. Pupils enjoy exploring a variety of engaging learning activities, such as dance and textile workshops during 'Fabulosity Fridays'. Pupils value the variety of visits within the local area that broaden their experience and enrich their learning. Overall, rates of school attendance have improved over the last year but remain low.

A majority of pupils contribute to the life of the school through a range of active pupil leadership groups. Pupil leaders fulfil their responsibilities well and are proud of their role. They make decisions that improve the well-being of pupils, for instance by enhancing the range of equipment available for pupils to be active at breaktimes. Overall, pupils' impact on the school's strategic decision-making is at an early stage of development.

Many pupils are developing well as ethically, informed citizens. For example, they explore a range of topical issues thoughtfully, including the school's carbon footprint, the health of the oceans and the challenge of global warming. Many older pupils demonstrate a mature concern for the needs of others and are proud of their efforts to support local people in the community, for example through their work to support a charitable food pantry established to help local people with rising food costs.

Teaching and learning experiences

The federation has made good progress in designing a curriculum that meets the needs of most pupils well. Teachers provide a broad range of stimulating learning experiences that motivate most pupils and fuel their enthusiasm for learning successfully. Because of this, many pupils speak knowledgeably about what they have learned and recall these experiences well. Leaders and teachers share a firm commitment to ensuring that all pupils across the federation have access to the same broad range of learning opportunities. For example, pupils benefit from valuable shared visits that enhance and extend their learning beneficially. Teachers collaborate to pool their ideas and expertise effectively. They use consistent teaching methods and approaches and share high expectations for pupils' progress and enjoyment in learning.

Teachers develop pupils' communication and digital skills purposefully. They make systematic provision to ensure that pupils build on these skills progressively and use them to advance their learning in other curriculum areas. Teachers support pupils to make good progress in their numeracy skills as they move through the school. However, they do not provide enough scope for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge in worthwhile contexts in their wider learning. Many teachers use regular, focused sessions to develop pupils' spoken Welsh successfully. In the best instances, they use interactive games to give pupils frequent opportunities to speak Welsh and challenge them to extend their speaking by building on what they know. Where teaching is less effective, the pace of sessions is slower and pupils have fewer opportunities to use the language expressively.

Teachers make beneficial use of the school's locality and surrounding area as a context for pupils' learning. For example, they organise visits to the local library and to nearby sites of historical interest to inform pupils' topic work. They provide many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about their Welsh heritage and culture, such as the impact of industrialisation in South Wales and the role that trade and migration have played in creating the diversity of modern Wales. This ensures that nearly all pupils develop a strong sense of their history and identity.

Teachers promote pupils' understanding of topical issues well. For example, older pupils research the ecological threat plastic pollution poses for the puffin population in Pembrokeshire and evaluate the pros and cons of tourism in Eryri National Park. Teachers use online workshops to raise older pupils' awareness of the career paths offered by a variety of public and private sector employers. They work effectively to develop pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to manage risk and behave responsibly online. Staff provide suitable opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy relationships and the negative impact of prejudicial attitudes and behaviours such as racism and homophobia.

Staff build strong and effective working relationships with pupils. They set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour and engagement in lessons and reinforce these consistently well. In most lessons, teachers set clear goals for learning and provide useful instructions and explanations that guide pupils helpfully. Most teachers recap relevant aspects of pupils' previous learning and build thoughtfully on their existing knowledge and experience. This enables most pupils to tackle new tasks confidently and to draw on what they know if they become stuck. Teachers and learning support

assistants work well together. They share a clear understanding of their roles and work responsively to address the needs of pupils as they arise.

Teachers generally match tasks and resources to meet the range of pupils' needs successfully. For example, they prepare useful digital materials that support older pupils' independent learning and enable them to select tasks that challenge them appropriately. In the foundation learning classes, staff use whole-class and focused group sessions to develop specific skills, such as pupils' recognition of letter sounds, effectively. However, staff do not always adapt the wider provision indoors and outdoors to create an environment that inspires younger pupils to pursue their learning through creative exploration and play. As a result, a majority of pupils move between chosen activities quickly without becoming absorbed or persevering. Where staff intervene to engage pupils more purposefully, they often assist or direct pupils rather than extending opportunities for them to learn independently.

Teachers model spoken language well. Many use a good variety of familiar Welsh phrases naturally in their everyday talk. They use and repeat relevant words with precision and emphasis to expand pupils' vocabulary in English and Welsh. Across the school, teachers provide frequent, purposeful opportunities for pupils to talk with partners and to discuss their learning. This ensures that most pupils are confident to express their views and ideas. Staff monitor pupils progress during lessons closely. They use questioning to check pupils' understanding and to sustain their engagement successfully. They provide additional guidance and address misconceptions when they arise. In the best examples, teachers use open questions effectively to encourage pupils to reflect on and extend their thinking carefully. Teachers provide useful feedback that supports pupils to improve their work.

Care, support and guidance

The school is an inclusive and caring community where staff know pupils, their families and the local community well. Leaders and staff place a high priority on building and sustaining positive relationships that support pupils to feel secure and valued.

The school's nurture provision for pupils is very strong. All staff promote the emotional, health and social needs of pupils purposefully through the regular use of strategies such as check-ins and mood boards. These consistent practices help pupils to identify, understand and begin to manage their feelings effectively. The school's 'Cwtch' provides a calming environment for pupils when situations overwhelm them. Staff manage this provision skilfully to provide timely, intensive support that helps pupils to regulate their emotions and to complete their work so that they continue to make progress despite difficulties they encounter. This contributes greatly to their happiness in school and to their readiness to learn.

Provision for pupils with ALN is a strength of the school. Regular pupil progress meetings between senior leaders and teachers ensure that staff identify pupils' additional educational, social and emotional needs at an early stage and provide for them effectively. Both ALN co-ordinators within the federation work closely together to share expertise and experience and to develop a consistent strategic response to the broad range of pupils' needs. Leaders monitor pupils' progress carefully and evaluate the impact of intervention on their progress rigorously, amending their

provision accordingly. The school deploys a committed team of well-trained learning support assistants who support pupils' individual needs skilfully. As a result, most pupils with ALN make good progress from their individual starting points.

Leaders make good use of professional partnerships with specialist agencies, such as the emotional health and well-being team, the educational psychology service, social care professionals and specialist teachers. This strengthens the school's capacity to provide effective care and support where needed. Staff provide regular, worthwhile opportunities for parents to share in and support their child's learning, for example by attending class assemblies or participating in helpful workshops and learning sessions arranged by the school's family engagement officer. This has a positive impact on parents' understanding of how they can assist their child's progress and boosts their own knowledge and confidence. Parents of pupils with ALN attend coffee mornings where they have the opportunity to speak with members of the local authority's additional needs team. This enables parents to gain useful support and guidance and to learn from one another's experience.

Teachers provide pupils with suitable opportunities to learn about a range of faiths and cultures. Worthwhile assemblies and lesson activities support pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and to develop their understanding of spirituality effectively. Staff promote a clear set of values and expectations consistently during the school day. As a result, most pupils have a strong understanding of fairness, equity and inclusion within their daily lives.

Pupil representatives such as the Pupil Leadership Group make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. For example, they promote and support the work of a local food charity. There is a fair and inclusive representation of pupils across these groups that reflects the strong commitment to equality within the school. These roles support the development of pupils' self-confidence and provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to influence aspects of the school's provision.

The school celebrates its Welsh heritage positively. Staff arrange purposeful visits to local landmarks and places of interest, such as to Cardiff Castle and St Fagan's Museum. Teachers provide suitable opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of their identity, heritage and culture. For example, staff plan frequent opportunities within the school's curriculum to extend and deepen pupils' knowledge of their locality and of the landscape, economy and people of Wales.

Staff ensure that they provide a useful range of opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles. They support pupils to recognise what it is good for them to eat and drink and to make healthy choices in school. The school enables pupils to be active and to develop their physical skills through organised lessons such as swimming and through regular visits from sports coaches.

The school has robust procedures to promote and monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality. Leaders provide appropriate help and support to identified pupils and their families. As a result, attendance rates have shown an improving trend in the last two years. Leaders promote a positive culture of safeguarding that is understood by all staff and governors. They place a high priority on maintaining the welfare of all pupils and staff and monitor and review specific arrangements regularly.

Leadership and management

Leaders, in collaboration with staff, parents, and pupils, have established a clear direction for both the school and the federation. A strong and shared sense of moral purpose drives their work. They work diligently to ensure the inclusion of all pupils and to support them to raise their aspirations for their learning and future lives. Senior leaders set high expectations for themselves, staff and pupils. They model strong professional values and behaviours consistently well. This results in a positive ethos centred on respect and equity across the federation.

Leaders work effectively to set medium and long-term goals for improving pupil outcomes. They develop purposeful plans and policies to achieve these aims and collaborate well with staff to monitor their impact. For example, since the federation's inception, leaders have implemented new strategies to increase parental engagement with the school. This includes helping parents to support their child's learning at home and developing parents' literacy and numeracy skills. This approach has strengthened the teamwork between staff and parents and provided parents with the confidence to contact the school when they have concerns. Overall, the school's positive relationship with parents and families is a significant strength.

Leaders have a strong awareness of the potential impact of socio-economic disadvantage on the progress and well-being of pupils. They work effectively with governors and external agencies to mitigate these effects. For example, they fund hoodies for all Year 6 pupils, provide vouchers for a local foodbank, and maintain a stock of groceries for families in need. They ensure that all pupils, regardless of their circumstances, have equal access to the full range of learning experiences.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The executive headteacher, head of school and middle leaders work purposefully together to monitor the quality of provision and the progress pupils make. They use a variety of effective methods to gather relevant first-hand evidence on specific aspects of the school's work. Leaders' assessments are highly evaluative and clearly identify what is working well and what steps are needed to develop further. These processes have enabled leaders to manage ongoing improvements effectively, for example, to design, implement and refine its curriculum successfully. Leaders recognise the need to involve a wider group of staff in self-evaluation activity to enhance its effectiveness.

Leaders provide staff with the necessary time and resources to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. This fosters a strong sense of staff well-being and encourages all staff to support the federation's ethos of continuous improvement. Partnering teachers across the federation for planning and assessment purposes positively impacts the sharing of effective practice and helps to reduce workload. Staff increasingly undertake leadership roles across both schools. For instance, middle leaders are paired with partners to share responsibility for leading on specific areas of learning. This practical arrangement provides a beneficial framework for improvement that builds leadership capacity across the two schools equally.

Senior leaders and governors allocate resources to support the school's improvement priorities and to promote effective teaching and learning efficiently. They use grant funding, including the pupil development grant, to support pupils'

progress and well-being appropriately. This includes providing useful interventions that help pupils to narrow gaps in their learning and beneficial nurture support, such as the 'Cwtch' class. Overall, resources are plentiful and well maintained.

Leaders and governors address national and local priorities well. Governors have a sound understanding of the federation's strengths and areas for improvement. They achieve this through the sharing of information by the headteacher and other leaders, and through the gathering of first-hand evidence. The governing body ensures appropriate arrangements to develop pupils' ability to make sensible choices about what they eat and drink. They ensure that robust procedures to keep pupils safe and secure are managed well and followed consistently.

Leaders foster a positive culture of professional learning across the federation. They use whole staff training to drive specific improvements effectively. The federation's collaboration with other schools in the cluster to support its implementation of Curriculum for Wales is a notable strength. Staff members benefit from this shared professional learning, which strengthens their knowledge and enhances their leadership skills. This has led to a clear understanding of progression in learning within the school and facilitates pupils' smooth transition to the local high school.

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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