



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

A report on
Glyncollen Primary School

**Heol Dolfain
Morrison
Swansea
SA6 6QF**

Date of inspection: June 2024

by

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

This inspection was undertaken as part of trying out our new inspection arrangements. As a result, this report may be slightly different in format to other published reports for providers in the sector.

About Glyncollen Primary School

Name of provider	Glyncollen Primary School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	192
Pupils of statutory school age	149
Number in nursery classes	26
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%)	8.7%
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%)	14.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (categories A-C)	4.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	28/06/2016
Start date of inspection	17/06/2024

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.

Summary

Leaders and staff at Glyncollen Primary School demonstrate a clear and effective vision that values all members of the school community and successfully promotes and supports pupils' well-being. The school is highly inclusive and, through its curriculum and wider work, establishes a strong sense of community, friendship and belonging.

Throughout the school, pupils are happy, polite and well-behaved. All staff develop effective relationships with the pupils in their care, based on respect, compassion and high expectations. Staff have a good understanding of individual pupils' needs, and in general meet them well. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is well-considered and a hard-working team of teaching assistants deliver support with sensitivity and skill.

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those with ALN, make sound progress in their learning. Younger pupils quickly develop good, early physical and social skills that stand them in good stead for life in and out of school. As they move through the school, most pupils develop strong oracy and writing skills, which they use to good effect in a range of contexts. However, the progress pupils make in mathematics and in the development of their Welsh language skills is less consistent.

School leaders, including the supportive governing body, work diligently to identify and improve any aspects of the school's work that require improvement. This has led to improvements in pupils' writing and in teachers' use of the outdoor learning environment for example. However, recently introduced independent activities are not always purposeful or challenging enough, and not enough staff have opportunities to lead important improvement work.

The school works productively with a wide range of partners, including the very effective parent and teacher association. This group provides the school with invaluable support and facilitates beneficial opportunities for pupils to contribute to wider society.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Strengthen distributed leadership with a focus on sharpening the provision for pupils' Welsh and mathematics skills
- R2 Provide challenging and purposeful independent learning activities that enable pupils to apply their skills progressively

What happens next

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

Main findings

Glyncollen Primary School is a calm, happy and welcoming school where most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make sound progress in their well-being and learning. The headteacher, staff and governors have established an impressive and inclusive vision for the school that openly values and celebrates pupils' skills, cultures and contributions. Support for pupils' well-being is very effective and is a strength of the school. In nearly all cases, staff provide pupils with high levels of care, support and encouragement. This enables most pupils to develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem and positive attitudes towards their learning and school life.

A strong sense of community permeates the school. Throughout Glyncollen, staff treat pupils with high levels of care, respect and kindness. The strength of these relationships means that most pupils feel safe in school and know who to talk to if they are upset. The school's curriculum provides pupils with valuable opportunities to learn about, and in, the local area. Staff make excellent use of the locality to enhance and enrich pupils' learning and to give them the opportunity to develop as ethical and informed citizens. This work is heightened by the school's proactive and supportive parent and teacher association, known as the Friends of Glyncollen School (FROGS). In addition to helpfully raising funds, the FROGS robustly support the school in becoming a focal point in the local community. With the help of the 'Tiny Tadpoles' pupil group, their donation of gift bags to children in the local hospital helps to develop pupils' sense of empathy and contribution to society. The school makes sound provision for celebrating diversity and recognising the achievements and lives of people from different backgrounds, religions and cultures. This work enriches the school's inclusive ethos and helps pupils of all ages to develop an appropriate understanding of how they can contribute to an inclusive society.

All staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and model these consistently and ably. As a result, nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They engage positively with staff and their friends and show care and understanding towards each other. Overall, staff have a good understanding of the needs of individual pupils. In general, teachers use this knowledge effectively to tailor learning and provide appropriate challenge when working with smaller groups of pupils on focused tasks. They make good use of questioning to assess pupils' understanding and provide valuable verbal feedback and clarification when required. This enables pupils to become secure in their understanding and supports them to move their learning forward at a good pace.

When pupils start school, staff in the two youngest classes skilfully ensure that their earliest experiences of education are highly valuable. Younger pupils benefit greatly from high quality opportunities to learn through play and in the outdoors. Early years

staff make excellent use of the outdoor learning environment, including the impressive forest area, to develop pupils' early communication, social and physical skills very effectively.

In nearly all cases, staff are effective and engaging language role models. From an early age, this helps pupils to quickly learn to speak happily and naturally with others, including visitors to the school. As such, by the time they leave the school most pupils speak confidently, clearly and with a solid range of vocabulary. Recent work to improve pupils' writing skills has been successful and most pupils across the school write well. Teachers have established a clear process for developing pupils' writing that supports them to plan, draft and edit their work effectively. However, the progress pupils make in mathematics and in the development of their Welsh language skills is less consistent. The school's planning and provision for learning in these areas does not always enable pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding systematically as they move through the school.

The provision for pupils with ALN is well-led and thoughtfully considered. ALN pupils benefit from a valuable and effective range of interventions and support programmes that enable most to make good progress towards their personal targets. Teaching assistants deliver support with high levels of care and skill. They ask useful questions and give helpful prompts that enable ALN pupils to clarify their understanding and move their learning on quickly. The school works constructively with a wide range of external partners to support approaches to ALN provision, well-being and transition. A purposeful relationship with the local comprehensive school supports Year 6 pupils' preparations for the next steps in their education well and helps to put their minds at ease.

The school's procedures for managing attendance are robust and effective. As a result, most pupils, including those who are eligible for free school meals, attend school regularly. Whilst at school, staff keep pupils safe through a strong safeguarding culture which is supported well by the governing body. Nearly all governors play an active and enthusiastic role in the life of the school. They provide the headteacher with valuable support and fulfil their role as critical friend successfully. Where appropriate, governors join school leaders and staff in carrying out useful activities to evaluate the school's work. This enables governors to gain a sound first-hand knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. In general, school leaders know the school well and drive improvements successfully. Recently, work to enhance pupils' engagement and enjoyment in learning has been addressed well through the introduction of independent 'quests'. Generally, pupils look forward to these learning tasks and engage with them happily and confidently. Too often though, 'quests' are not challenging or purposeful enough and do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to build on the skills and knowledge they have developed previously.

Opportunities for professional learning are regular, generally effective and in the main link purposefully to the school's priorities. As a result, the school has made successful improvements to aspects of its work, such as pupils' writing and the impact of outdoor learning. Overall, staff engage enthusiastically with opportunities to develop their own knowledge, skills and practice. Leaders promote career development, and this has led to a few staff gaining promotions to posts in other settings recently. During this period of staffing changes though, leadership

responsibilities have not been distributed effectively enough to enable a wide enough range of staff to lead important aspects of the school's work.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils 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 use of the pupil development grant.

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

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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