



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

A report on

Glanhowy Primary School

**Dukestown Road
Tredegar
Blaenau Gwent
NP22 4QD**

Date of inspection: November 2024

by

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

About Glanhowy Primary School

Name of provider	Glanhowy Primary School
Local authority	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	303
Pupils of statutory school age	224
Number in nursery classes	44
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%)	31.7%
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 11.1%)	9.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2014
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/01/2018
Start date of inspection	11/11/2024

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

Glanhowy Primary is an inclusive school where both staff and students feel safe and valued. The headteacher sets high expectations and serves as an exemplary role model, fostering a passionate team dedicated to creating a supportive learning environment. This commitment to care and well-being helps all pupils, including those from socio-economically disadvantaged contexts and those with additional learning needs (ALN), to make strong progress. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary.

Most pupils make a strong improvement in listening and speaking from a young age. The school fosters a strong reading culture and by Year 6 many pupils develop effective reading skills and are confident readers. While pupils generally make good progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and digital skills, they do not always have the opportunity to use these skills as well as they could in their work across the curriculum.

The curriculum is diverse and engaging, incorporating pupils' interests and current events to enhance learning. Teachers plan stimulating projects that encourage inquiry as a result, nearly all pupils actively engage with their learning. Classrooms are calm and ordered and support pupils to develop their independence. This ensures that pupils across the school are engaged and enthusiastic about their learning. Most pupils make good progress, and verbal feedback helps them to improve. However, written feedback and ongoing assessments do not always inform the next steps in learning well enough.

The school's leaders engage in a range of monitoring activities. Senior leaders are aware of the progress made by different groups of learners, including those with ALN and those eligible for free school meals. However, leaders tend to focus too much on data from tests and online assessments. They do not always make enough use of the information from pupils' books and lessons to identify the most important priorities for improvement. Additionally, some school improvement targets tend to be too broad and do not always prioritise aspects of teaching and learning that require improvement.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Ensure that evaluation processes use a wide range of information to identify opportunities to improve teaching and learning.
- R2 Ensure that the curriculum and teaching enable pupils to develop and use their skills to the standard of which they are capable

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Glanhowy Primary is an inclusive school where staff and pupils feel safe and valued. The headteacher has high expectations and leads by example. Leaders invest in the professional development of staff and support their well-being, resulting in a passionate team of professionals who provide a supportive learning environment where everyone feels valued. The highly effective care, support and well-being provided by the staff is central to the school's vision and helps most pupils, including those affected by the impact of challenging socio-economic circumstances and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress overall throughout their time at school. Standards of pupil behaviour, across the school are excellent. The school's curriculum is diverse, engaging, and well-rounded. Staff design stimulating learning experiences that include pupils' ideas and interests, making projects more relevant and engaging for them. They provide open-ended opportunities for pupils to explore areas of curiosity through an inquiry approach, which is particularly successful in engaging pupils in their learning. Teachers use current local, national, and international events to broaden pupils' horizons and develop their curiosity about the world. This supports older pupils in drawing comparisons across different periods and societies, such as between the hierarchy in ancient Egypt and modern democracies. A strong aspect of the school's work is its provision for the expressive arts, offering opportunities for pupils to explore art, music, drama, dance, and media. Nearly all pupils exhibit positive attitudes to learning and engage successfully with their tasks.

Teachers organise classrooms well to support learning, enabling pupils, including those with ALN, to access resources independently. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to use the outdoor learning environment to support their learning and development. In most classes, teaching ensures that pupils, make good progress in most aspects of their learning. Most teachers provide clear explanations and use questioning effectively to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding. They provide helpful verbal feedback while pupils work, which helps pupils to improve. However, written feedback does not always lead to further development in pupils' work. Teachers do not consistently use ongoing assessments of pupils' progress to plan the next steps in learning, particularly when teaching writing skills.

The school's ALN provision ensures that the identified needs of pupils are met, resulting in most pupils with additional needs making strong progress from their starting point. The skilled staff in the school's learning resource base understand and meet the varied and complex needs of pupils by implementing effective strategies to address their social, emotional, and learning needs. Staff collaborate effectively and share good practices. For example, staff in the Learning Resource Base have led training on visual timetables and classroom environments, enabling the effective use of resources to support pupils across the school.

Most pupils develop a range of skills well. They make rapid progress in listening and speaking skills upon entering the Nursery class, often from low starting points. Older pupils confidently use technical language and take risks in exploring new terminology when sharing ideas.

Spotlight: A whole-school approach to develop enthusiasm for reading

The school has effectively developed and fostered a love for reading. Pupils engage in reading and talk about books with enthusiasm. This has been developed through a whole-school approach, which allows pupils to get feedback on their progress and receive individualised reading recommendations. These keep pupils enthused and motivated to read. By Year 6, many pupils acquire advanced reading skills, such as inferring an author's subtle message and justifying their viewpoints with evidence from texts.

Pupils across the school develop appropriate mathematical and digital skills. Staff place a strong focus on developing pupils' Welsh language skills. They are effective language role models, and pupils make secure progress in using an increasing range of language patterns and vocabulary as they move through the school. In English, many pupils make appropriate progress in developing their writing skills. However, teachers do not always pitch lessons at the right level to build progressively on prior learning. Most pupils apply their literacy, numeracy, and digital skills well when they have the opportunity. However, they do not always have the opportunity to use these skills to the standards they could, for example during independent learning tasks.

The school conducts various monitoring activities that engage staff in evaluating their curriculum responsibilities, contributing to the overall school improvement process. Senior leaders understand the progress made by groups of learners, including those with ALN and those eligible for free school meals. Senior leaders use information from tests and online assessments appropriately to consider the progress of groups of learners. However, arrangements to use other sources of information, such as progress in lessons and pupils' books, are less well-developed. As a result, improvement priorities occasionally lack precision and do not always focus on the areas most in need of improvement.

Senior leaders have collaborated well with partners. For example, work with the local cluster of schools has led to greater consistency in attendance procedures. The school strongly emphasises the professional development of its staff. Senior leaders support staff in developing their teaching and leadership skills, fostering a culture of seeking and sharing good practices that positively impact on provision. For example, visits to other schools led to the introduction of learning journals across the school. As a result, older pupils use learning journals effectively to become confident and motivated learners. Senior leaders and staff are accessible to parents, ensuring ongoing and effective communication.

Governors know their school well and actively participate in its life. They engage in self-evaluation activities and work closely with curriculum leaders, robustly monitoring progress against priorities such as attendance. They provide appropriate support and challenge for leaders.

The school encourages pupils to develop leadership skills and take on responsibilities, providing opportunities for engagement in decision-making. Through roles in the Pupil Leadership Team or groups like Language Legends, pupils have a voice in shaping their school experience. Consequently, pupils have a sense of ownership and responsibility for school improvement. For example, they lead assemblies on a variety of themes and work to improve online safety.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any 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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