

Best practice

Glan Usk Primary School, Newport

Number of pupils: 660

Age range: 3-11 years

Date of Estyn inspection: May 2011



Area of sector-leading practice which has been identified during inspection and relates to a particular quality indicator:

Key Question: 3

Quality indicator: 1

Aspect: Leadership

Context and background to sector-leading practice:

Glan Usk is a large primary school situated in the city of Newport. The school has evolved from the amalgamation of three separate schools in September 2008. Staff and children moved into purpose built PFI accommodation in January 2010. Since amalgamation there has been a downward trend in pupils' baseline on entry, particularly in the areas of 'Writing' and 'Personal Social'.

19% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. 15% of pupils have English as an Additional Language. 21% of pupils are identified as having Additional Learning Needs.

The management structure was established prior to the amalgamation and creation of Glan

Usk Primary School.

The innovative management structure succeeds in supporting and empowering all staff to make decisions and take responsibility.

Description of nature of strategy or activity:

The school has placed a strong emphasis on developing effective distributed leadership and the professional development of all staff. The school's philosophy is to empower staff to take on leadership roles within their designated areas of responsibility.

The school's management structure evolved from discussions with senior leaders and governors. The school identified three distinct phases across the age ranges – Lower (Nursery – Year One), Mid (Year Two – Year Four) and Upper (Year Five and Year Six). The Mid Phase is seen as crucial in terms of providing seamless transition from Foundation Phase to key stage two. A particular focus on Areas of Learning reflect the national agenda for school effectiveness – Communication, Culture & Creativity, Wellbeing and Enterprise. TLR postholders are responsible for each of these areas. All staff are members of a phase and an area of learning, in order to ensure representation from across the school in each team.

Two 'Away Days' prior to amalgamation ensured that staff were instrumental in the development of the school's mission statement, vision and aims and the development of the School Improvement

"the focus was to continue to improve standards of learning, ensure consistency and reduce variation"

Plan. From the outset, all staff gained a clear understanding of the new school's philosophy and its approach to learning. The strategic development was further supported through the ongoing professional development of all staff.

Each year, staff are allocated to teams within school. Their roles and responsibilities are clearly identified. These are focused on the results of self evaluation, linked to school improvement planning and include management and subject coordinator objectives. All leaders take into account the views of staff, parents, governors and pupils and use this to evaluate aspects of school life related to their team.

Throughout the year, a precise schedule of regular school improvement meetings enable quality professional dialogue within teams. All meetings are facilitated by the TLR postholders who are empowered to make their own decisions on matters that arise. The school encourages team leaders to be both proactive and reactive to school issues. Highly effective lines of communication ensure all staff are aware of the decision making process within the school.

This transparent process allows for excellent team work and close working relationships focused on the impact on provision and standards.

What impact has this work had on provision and learners' standards?

As a recently amalgamated school, the focus was to continue to improve standards of learning, ensure consistency and reduce variation across the school.

The school's philosophy and practice of distributed leadership has ensured:

- consistently high standards of attainment which are above local and national averages;
- greater consistency in teaching;
- a clear learning focus throughout the school; and
- a proactive approach to tackling social disadvantage and promoting pupils' wellbeing.