Dros ddysgwyr, dros Gymru
For learners, for Wales

A report on

The Dell Primary School

Welsh Street
Chepstow
Monmouthshire
NP16 5UQ

Date of inspection: September 2026

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About The Dell Primary School

Name of provider	The Dell Primary School
Local authority	Monmouthshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	400
Pupils of statutory school age	341
Number in nursery classes	NULL
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 21.7%)	3.40%
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 9.2%)	1.50%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.00%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	Yes
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2025

Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/06/2022
Start date of inspection	21/09/2026

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

The Dell Primary School is a warm and caring community where pupils feel valued and are proud to be part of the school. The headteacher provides clear leadership and, together with staff, places pupils' learning and well-being at the heart of the school's work. Strong relationships and the school's 'be kind, be your best' values help pupils to feel safe and develop as respectful, considerate and responsible young people. This is a particular strength of the school.

Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs and those eligible for free school meals, make good progress from their starting points. Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning, concentrate well and approach their work with confidence.

The quality of teaching is effective across the school. Teachers know their pupils and their individual abilities well and use this knowledge to provide appropriate support and challenge. Lessons have a purposeful pace, build effectively on what pupils already know and include clear explanations that help pupils understand new learning. Most teachers use questioning effectively to check understanding, address misconceptions and encourage pupils to think more deeply. Useful feedback helps pupils understand what they do well and how to improve. As a result, most pupils take increasing responsibility for their learning and develop as confident, independent learners.

Most pupils develop strong literacy and numeracy skills. They become increasingly confident readers and use their understanding of texts effectively to improve their writing. They develop strong number skills, which they apply confidently when solving mathematical problems. Pupils also develop their digital skills progressively.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum and pupils develop a strong understanding of diversity. Professional learning has increased staff's use of Welsh, but pupils do not develop their Welsh language skills or their understanding of Welsh culture and heritage well enough.

Leaders know the school well and use self-evaluation and professional learning effectively to improve provision. Governors provide effective support and challenge and contribute well to the school's strong safeguarding culture. Overall, most pupils attend school regularly, although those eligible for free school meals attend less regularly than their peers.

Recommendations

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

R1 Strengthen pupils' Welsh language skills and their understanding of Welsh culture and heritage to develop a stronger Welsh ethos across the school.

R2 Reduce the gap in attendance between pupils eligible for free school meals and other pupils through targeted action.

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

The headteacher provides clear and purposeful strategic direction and has established a strong culture of high expectations. Leaders communicate a clear vision that places pupils' learning and well-being at the centre of the school's work. Staff share this vision and work together effectively to achieve it. There is a strong sense of teamwork and a consistent focus on improving provision and outcomes for pupils.

During their time at the school, most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress from their individual starting points. Most pupils develop their reading skills well as they move through the school. A consistent approach to teaching phonics gives younger pupils a secure foundation for reading, enabling them to decode increasingly unfamiliar words and read with growing fluency and understanding. As pupils progress, they develop a broad vocabulary and use clues within texts to infer meaning and explain characters' actions and motivations accurately. Older pupils increasingly draw together information from text, make sensible predictions and justify their views using evidence from what they have read.

Teachers make effective links between pupils' reading and writing. Pupils explore a suitable range of texts and identify features of different forms of writing, including how authors organise their ideas, select vocabulary and use language for specific purposes and audiences. Most older pupils apply this understanding successfully to their own work, for example, by choosing increasingly ambitious vocabulary, organising their writing appropriately and adapting their style to suit different purposes. As a result, pupils' reading skills contribute effectively to the good progress most make in writing.

Teachers plan effectively for the progressive development of pupils' number skills and provide suitable opportunities for pupils to apply these in relevant contexts. Most pupils develop strong number skills and use these confidently and accurately to solve increasingly challenging mathematical problems. They select suitable methods, apply their number knowledge effectively and explain their thinking appropriately. Pupils have regular opportunities to apply these skills, although opportunities to use their knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measure are less frequent, both in mathematics and across the curriculum. They select suitable methods, apply their number knowledge effectively and explain their thinking appropriately. Pupils develop their digital skills progressively and, by the time they leave the school, use a suitable range of skills confidently.

Professional learning has impacted positively on staff skills, raised the profile of Welsh and increased its everyday use across the school. Most pupils enjoy learning Welsh and develop suitable basic oracy skills. However, as pupils progress through the school, their

ability to extend their responses and use a wider range of language patterns and tenses remains limited. Opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of Welsh culture and heritage are also at an early stage of development and are mainly confined to discrete events and activities.

Nearly all pupils engage purposefully in lessons, sustain their concentration well and develop as confident, independent learners. Teachers understand pupils' needs well and use this knowledge effectively to provide appropriate support and challenge. Most lessons have a purposeful pace, build effectively on prior learning and include clear explanations that help pupils to understand what they are learning. Most teachers use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding, address misconceptions and deepen their learning. The school's consistent approach to feedback helps pupils to understand what they do well and how to improve, and most take increasing responsibility for reviewing and refining their work. Well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning environments further support pupils to engage positively and independently in their learning. Many pupils benefit from worthwhile opportunities to take on leadership roles and contribute their views about aspects of school life. These experiences develop pupils' independence well and provide meaningful opportunities for them to influence the work of the school.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that develops pupils' knowledge, skills and experiences effectively. Teachers plan well for progression and provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply their learning across the curriculum. Pupils develop a strong understanding of diversity and of the experiences and contributions of people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Leaders foster a positive and supportive working culture in which staff feel valued and motivated. Staff consistently model and reinforce the school's values. This helps them to build strong, trusting relationships with pupils. Through worthwhile opportunities to explore social, moral and spiritual issues, staff help pupils to reflect on their values and beliefs and understand how these shape their behaviour, relationships and understanding of themselves and others.

Spotlight: Developing pupils as respectful and responsible members of society

The school's strong focus on values and positive behaviour has a powerful impact on how pupils treat one another. Pupils understand how their actions affect others and look for ways to make a positive difference. For example, staff encourage them daily to make at least one person happy each day by paying a compliment or making a small gift. Across the school, pupils show notably high levels of empathy, tolerance and care towards others. This approach develops pupils' personal and social qualities effectively and prepares them well to contribute positively to wider society.

The school supports pupils with additional learning and emotional needs effectively. Staff identify pupils' needs and provide suitable interventions and tailored resources. This supports most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress from their starting points and towards their individual targets. Transition arrangements are strong. Teachers work closely with early years providers to understand pupils' needs before they enter the school, while enhanced arrangements provide valuable support for pupils with additional needs when they move between year groups or to secondary school.

The school promotes regular attendance effectively through early intervention, close work with families and bespoke support. Consistent adult support and well-being check-ins help vulnerable pupils settle successfully at the start of the school day. These approaches contribute to good overall rates of attendance. Despite this support, the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than that of other pupils.

Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They use a suitable range of self-evaluation activities, increasingly involving staff and governors, to identify priorities and secure worthwhile improvements. Governors provide effective support and challenge. They maintain good oversight of finances and support the school's strong safeguarding culture. Leaders and governors manage resources carefully, including funding to support pupils affected by socio-economic disadvantage.

Professional learning is relevant and closely aligned with school and individual priorities. Leaders develop productive partnerships with other schools and families and recognise the need to strengthen communication with parents so that it is consistently clear and timely. Opportunities to share effective practice and work with other schools help staff refine their teaching.

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.

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