



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**The Dell Primary School
Welsh Street
Chepstow
Monmouthshire
NP16 5UQ**

Date of inspection: July 2013

by

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



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Context

The Dell Primary School is in Chepstow, Monmouthshire. It serves the local area, where there is a degree of social and economic advantage. There are 410 pupils on roll between the ages of four and 11. Approximately 5% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well below the Welsh average (21%). The school has identified a small number of pupils with additional learning needs, including a very few who have statements of special educational needs, which is also well below the Welsh average (22%).

No pupil has English as an additional language or Welsh as the language of the home. Nearly all pupils are white British by birth. Only a very few are from different ethnic backgrounds. No pupil was excluded in the previous school year or is looked after by the local authority.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2012. Two teachers were absent during the inspection. Their places were taken by temporary supply teachers.

The individual school budget per pupil for The Dell Primary School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £2,777 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the schools in Monmouthshire is £6,421 and the minimum is £2,777. The Dell is 33rd out of the 33 primary schools in Monmouthshire in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Adequate

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- standards at the end of the Foundation Phase are very high;
- performance at the end of key stage 2 at the expected level has improved in 2012 and is high compared to that in similar schools;
- standards in speaking, listening and reading are good across the school;
- standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes to each other and to adults are very good; and
- the quality of teaching is good.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- there are strengthening partnerships with other schools in order to improve standards;
- resources have been improved and provision has been strengthened, particularly in the Foundation Phase; and
- the governing body is now well informed and holds the senior leadership properly to account.

However:

- self-evaluation processes lack rigour and consistency;
- changes made to the leadership and staffing structures have not had sufficient time to impact on raising standards further;
- the recently appointed headteacher has yet to exercise an effective oversight of standards, whole-school arrangements and classroom practice; and
- although teachers plan and work together successfully in year groups, there is a lack of coherence in planning, co-ordination and evaluation at whole-school level.

Recommendations

- R1 In key stage 2, raise standards in English, mathematics and science at the higher levels
- R2 Improve standards in Welsh across the school and pupils' awareness of the culture and heritage of Wales
- R3 Use assessment for learning strategies consistently across the school
- R4 Develop leadership and management roles and responsibilities, so that procedures and practices across the school are consistent and coherent
- R5 Improve self-evaluation by adopting a rigorous and systematic approach to the gathering and analysis of first-hand evidence

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Pupils on entry to reception have knowledge, understanding and skills that are generally above those expected for pupils of their age.

Nearly all pupils across the school have good speaking and listening skills. In the Foundation Phase, pupils respond accurately to teachers' questions and are confident to speak with one another in group and whole-class discussions, making relevant comments and suggestions. In key stage 2, most pupils are articulate. They converse and respond maturely on a range of texts and themes.

Many pupils in all year groups read well above expectations for their age and stage of development. In the Foundation Phase, they develop a good understanding of letters and sounds and enjoy reading. They are enthusiastic and confident readers by the time they reach the end of the phase. Many pupils in key stage 2 make more than expected progress in their reading. They are able to read meaningfully and express an opinion on books and their favourite authors confidently. By the end of the key stage, many use non-fiction books and information and communication technology (ICT) competently to locate specific pieces of information.

Throughout the school, most pupils make good progress in developing their spelling, handwriting and punctuation skills. They apply these skills well in their writing. By the end of the Foundation Phase, many produce an interesting range of different styles of writing. As they move through key stage 2, they write well in response to class stories and topics. Most express and organise their ideas in written forms confidently and coherently. They use different sentence structures, paragraphing and punctuation with increasing effectiveness. However, most pupils do not write for a wide enough range of audiences and purposes in subjects other than English.

Across the school, nearly all pupils apply their numeracy skills well and make steady progress in their ICT skills. Most use thinking skills effectively in their learning.

Overall, pupils do not make sufficient progress in speaking, reading and writing in Welsh. Most rarely use their Welsh language skills incidentally in conversation or in asking and answering questions in their daily lives in school. Standards in Welsh are weak, reflecting the lack of opportunities given for pupils to use it consistently in their lessons and around the school.

At the end of Foundation Phase, pupils' attainment at both the expected and higher outcomes compares well with performance levels in similar schools. More able pupils, in particular, attain very well in language and mathematical development.

At the end of key stage 2, when compared to those in similar schools, results are high at the expected level 4. The trend of improvement is positive at this level.

However, at the higher level 5 results are lower than the average for the family of schools. This is particularly so in English and science.

Generally, pupils make reasonable progress by the time they leave the school, but many do not go on to reach higher levels of attainment or exceed the modest targets set for them.

The small proportion of pupils receiving free school meals do not attain as well as those not receiving them. This difference is greater than the average for the family.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils are happy in school and feel safe. They develop positive attitudes about themselves and each other. They have increasingly mature social and personal skills and know the values that the school emphasises through its daily life and work. These, along with talks by outside visitors on such topics as leadership, prepare older pupils for life outside school well. Most pupils have positive attitudes to healthy living and know the importance of exercise and a healthy diet.

The school council is enthusiastic and takes an active part in making purposeful decisions that influence school life, for example in choosing colour schemes for classes and the charities to support with their fundraising, and also helping with staff appointments. Members enjoy their role and develop a sense of maturity and responsibility by selling the school newspaper to support pupils abroad.

There are strong links with the local community, which give pupils a good appreciation of their responsibilities as members of it. They develop a good understanding of the lives of others through their connections with many community groups and links with the nearby racecourse and local industry.

Most pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They work quietly in lessons, and have very well-developed listening skills and positive attitudes to learning. They take on a range of responsibilities in class and across the school and carry them out conscientiously. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good overall, with many pupils showing concern and respect for others.

Attendance levels are high. The school is consistently among the top 50% in comparison to similar schools and in three of the last five years was in the top 25%. Almost all pupils arrive at school on time.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Adequate

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets the requirements of the Foundation Phase and the National Curriculum appropriately. Foundation Phase pupils have a good range of creative and stimulating learning experiences. Most planned opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 are suitably challenging and stimulating.

The school makes effective use of withdrawal groups for literacy and this has a good impact on pupils' standards. In addition, specialist music and physical education provision has a positive effect on standards. The extensive range of extra-curricular clubs provided and links with the local community enrich and extend pupils' learning.

There is a consistent approach to short-term planning within year groups, although teachers do not evaluate or review these plans. Moreover, longer-term planning does not clearly identify how learning experiences should build systematically on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding across the school.

Provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills is limited to Welsh lessons. The school is beginning to place a greater emphasis on raising pupils' awareness of their Welsh culture and heritage, which is under-emphasised in the curriculum.

There is good provision for sustainable development. This is supported by an enthusiastic eco council, which has a good understanding of the principles involved. Pupils know how others live through the school's links with Malawi and Oklahoma. They are effective in promoting healthy eating, for example by running an occasional fruit tuck shop.

Teaching: Good

Many teachers begin their lessons purposefully and explain clearly what pupils should achieve. They regularly encourage pupils to work independently and in small groups. They successfully encourage their pupils to discuss how well they have achieved previous learning objectives. In some of the best examples, teachers encourage pupils to make electronic recordings of what they have done and to analyse the work of others in the class.

Many teachers promote successful learning by encouraging pupils to work with confident attitudes and to enjoy their activities. They use a wide range of resources to do this. They generally match the work to the different abilities in their classes. However they do not have high enough expectations of what the most able should achieve.

In the small number of lessons where there were shortcomings, teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' skills and confidence to respond in Welsh. They lack the necessary skills to teach the subject effectively.

The school is using a new system to track progress and the development of skills rigorously. However, this is not yet used consistently across the school. Many teachers are beginning to use an effective range of assessment for learning strategies to support pupils' learning well. In the best examples, pupils very confidently and accurately review their own efforts and those of others against previously agreed criteria and targets. Teachers mark work regularly and indicate effectively ways forward. Reports to parents are clear and informative.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has effective arrangements to support pupils' wellbeing. This includes regular opportunities for pupils to engage in a good range of sporting activities. Across the school, learning experiences offer stimulating opportunities to promote learners' social, moral, and cultural development. The provision for spiritual development is less effective, particularly because there are no agreed arrangements for collective worship in classes to ensure that statutory requirements are met.

The school engages effectively with specialist agencies, such as educational psychologists and social services. These help to improve outcomes for pupils with additional learning needs and provide good support for other pupils and their parents. There is good provision to monitor attendance and to take effective action if needed.

All staff provide high-quality personal support and individual guidance to those who need to be helped or reassured. There are well-established arrangements to build positive attitudes and a sense of responsibility. Staff identify learning difficulties early and provide pupils with appropriate and timely support. They tailor individual education plans and support programmes carefully to meet individual pupils' needs.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a caring and supportive community that values all pupils and recognises their achievements. There are appropriate policies, procedures and plans in place to ensure equality of opportunity for all. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils that contribute successfully to the positive ethos. All staff successfully encourage pupils to treat each other fairly and to respect individual differences and backgrounds. There are effective policies in place to discourage anti-social behaviour and to ensure that no pupil is subject to any discrimination.

The accommodation is well maintained and used well. However, most classrooms, including the two demountable units, are cramped and are overcrowded. In the last year, classrooms and corridors have been redecorated to create a more conducive atmosphere for learning. Classrooms are well equipped with resources, which match the needs of pupils. Throughout the school, there are attractive displays of information and pupils' work which set a positive tone.

The outside areas are used effectively for physical education and learning. The large conservation area, playground and covered learning areas offer valuable resources to pupils to enhance their learning and play.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
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Adequate

Leadership: Adequate

The recently appointed headteacher has introduced various useful initiatives, particularly in developing the school's vision and the provision for ICT. However, he has yet to gain a clear oversight of standards, whole-school arrangements and classroom practice.

The school has recently adopted a new staffing structure with many teachers taking on different managerial roles and responsibilities. However the school is led by a relatively small senior leadership team for its size and the deputy headteacher has a heavy workload.

Teachers plan and work together well in year groups and they meet regularly in phase teams and as a whole staff. However, there is a lack of co-ordination and coherence in procedures and practices across the school because those with responsibilities do not take a wider view of the impact of their decisions

The governing body shares the headteacher's vision for the school. It has introduced many new procedures and reshaped its structure, in order to increase its efficiency and effectiveness. Most governors have a link subject and they meet with their relevant aspect leader before every full governing body meeting. They are well informed about the school's performance and ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements. They offer strong support to the headteacher in embracing change and resolving issues. They hold the school properly to account for its work and carefully review the progress being made.

The school is well prepared for the introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies and it has made considerable improvements in the provision for the Foundation Phase and ICT. However, it has made less progress in developing Welsh as a second language.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school has a range of self-evaluation procedures that help to identify its strengths and areas for development. It gathers and analyses first-hand evidence, for example from surveys of parents' and pupils' opinions and from looking at pupils' work. In addition, the senior leadership team undertakes performance management reviews and listens to learners. However, there is no systematic cycle of activities and no formal programme of lesson observations involving subject and aspect leaders to inform annual reviews or action plans.

The school accurately analyses performance data. However, teachers are only beginning to be involved in this process and to have a sense of responsibility for the outcomes of their pupils' achievement.

The annual school improvement plan identifies a manageable set of targets with measurable success criteria, where relevant, linked to pupil outcomes.

The self-evaluation report, however, is not sufficiently critical and lacks details of supporting evidence.

Although the school has previously not had strong links with other schools, many staff recently visited a range of other providers. They attend network meetings and conferences locally and further afield. The school also actively participates in family of school events, but involvement in specific professional learning communities is limited.

Partnership working: Good

The school works effectively with a range of partners that make a successful contribution to improving outcomes for pupils. There are appropriate links with parents, the community and other schools, some of which are relatively new. For example, a number of local employers help pupils with projects, such as the school radio station and sporting events. The school uses ICT very well to improve communication with parents and other stakeholders so that they are regularly informed of events and the daily life of the school. Many parents are very supportive and appreciate the work of the school.

Suitable arrangements with partner secondary schools enable pupils to transfer smoothly to their next stage of learning. The headteacher has improved links with other primary schools in the local cluster in order to agree standards and to develop teachers' expertise. There have been recent contacts with other schools in the family of schools to discuss areas of common interest and concerns. The school works closely with the local authority and support services to plan for and assess the progress being made to reach its objectives.

Resource management: Good

The school makes good use of its accommodation. Support staff understand their roles and work effectively together. Leaders manage the provision for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time appropriately, which meets statutory requirements.

There are sound performance management processes in place to identify staff training needs. However, these needs are not sufficiently linked to areas identified in the school self-evaluation as areas for improvement.

The school organises its budget well and has good financial controls. It ensures that the money is spent carefully and its carry forward is in line with that recommended. Overall, good outcomes in terms of the standards reached by most pupils and the quality of provision indicate that the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In the Foundation Phase, pupils' performance at both the expected and higher outcomes compares well with performance levels in schools with similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and other schools in the family. In 2012 for the expected outcome, the school was in the top 25% for the Foundation Phase indicator and for personal, social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. In language, literacy and communication and mathematical development the school was in the upper 50%. At the higher outcome results were particularly strong, with the school in the top 25% in language, literacy and communication and mathematical development and in the upper 50% in personal, social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. Pupils' performance at both the expected and higher outcomes was above the family, local and national averages. In these assessments, boys underperformed compared to girls to about the same extent as in other schools in the family. At the higher level, the difference between the performance of boys and girls was very marked in English with girls outperforming boys by more than the family average.

In key stage 2, pupils' overall performance at the expected level placed the school in the upper 50% of similar schools in English and in the top 25% of these schools in science. Results were close to the family average in English and science and above in mathematics. The combined results were above national averages.

At the higher level, while results were better than those in 50% of similar schools in all three subjects, in English and science results were below the family average. In English they were close to the local average and above the national average. In mathematics they were in line with the family average and above local and national averages. In science results were below the family and above local and national averages.

Overall, trends of improvement are positive although standards in oracy in English have declined. In 2012, girls' performance was below that of boys in all areas. This is a significant difference when compared to the comparative results of schools in the family, locally and nationally. This was particularly noticeable in English and in science at the higher levels. In key stage 2 pupils entitled to free school meals do not generally achieve as well as other pupils, but the difference in performance is in line with the average for the family and for Wales.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Pupil questionnaires

One hundred and twelve pupils in key stage 2 completed the learner questionnaire.

All pupils:

- think that the teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and to make progress.

Nearly all pupils:

- feel safe in school;
- think that the school deals well with bullying;
- know whom to talk to if worried or upset;
- think that the school teaches them to be healthy;
- think that there are lots of chances to get regular exercise;
- think that they are doing well in school;
- know what to do and whom to ask if they find the work hard; and
- say that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work.

Many pupils:

- think that homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school;
- believe that other children behave well and that they can get on with their work; and
- say that nearly all children behave well at playtimes and at lunch times.

The views of pupils in The Dell Primary School are in line with those in other schools across Wales.

Parent/Carer questionnaire

Seventy parents or carers completed the parent/carers questionnaire.

Nearly all parents or carers:

- think that their child likes school; and
- said that their child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.

Most parents or carers:

- were satisfied with the school;
- think that their child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the school;

- think that pupils behave well in school;
- think that teaching is good;
- believe that staff expect their child to work hard and do his or her best; and
- say that there is a good range of activities, trips or visits.

Many parents or carers:

- believe that staff treat all children fairly and with respect;
- think that their child received appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual need;
- feel comfortable about approaching the school with question, suggestions or a problem; and
- understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

A majority of parents or carers:

- believe that homework that is given builds well on what their child learn in school;
- think that the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility;
- think that their child is well prepared for moving on to the next school; and
- think that the school is well run.

Around half of parents or carers:

- say that they are well informed about their child's progress.

In all cases, parents had a more negative view of the school than the averages for the responses of parents in Wales.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Peter Mathias	Reporting Inspector
David Peter Ellis	Team Inspector
Eleri Hurley	Team Inspector
Deirdre Emberson	Lay Inspector
Sue Henderson	Peer Inspector
Stephen King	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Year groups, the Foundation Phase and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms – Primary

Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language;
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language;
- mathematics; and
- science.

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.