



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

**A report on**

**Deri Primary School  
Glynmarch Street  
Deri  
Bargoed  
CF81 9HZ**

**Date of inspection: March 2019**

**by**

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

## About Deri Primary School

Deri Primary School is just outside Bargoed in the Caerphilly local authority.

There are 98 pupils on roll, including eight full-time nursery pupils and eight pupils with complex needs in a local authority resource base at the school.

The three-year rolling average of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is 21%. This is just above the Wales average of 18%. The school states that around 26% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is above the Wales average of 21%. Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnicity and no pupils speak Welsh at home.

The headteacher was appointed in 2015. Estyn last inspected the school in July 2012.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.  
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

## Summary

Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs and those in the special resource base (SRB), make sound progress in their learning and achieve well. They are proud of their school and talk enthusiastically about their learning and enjoy the topics they study.

Successful teaching across the school ensures a positive working relationship between pupils, teachers and learning assistants. Most teachers prepare stimulating learning activities to meet the wide needs of pupils within their class. Staff make good use of the building to support pupils' learning.

The school engages with parents and the local community very well. Parents appreciate opportunities to celebrate their children's learning. The headteacher has established a clear, shared vision for the school. Staff in the SRB work well as part of the school's learning community, and all staff respond positively to advice from external stakeholders. Governors are very supportive of the school.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Increase the level of challenge for more able pupils
- R2 Improve the interface between the day-to-day management of the SRB and the rest of the school
- R3 Improve the provision for outdoor learning in the foundation phase
- R4 Improve attendance

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

Throughout their time at the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs and pupils in the special resource base (SRB), make sound progress in their learning and achieve well.

By the end of foundation phase, many pupils speak accurately and fluently. They are happy to discuss their learning with one another and with adults confidently. For example, they speak enthusiastically about Spike, the bearded dragon, a foundation phase visitor linked to their topic on dragons. At the end of key stage 2, most pupils have the age-appropriate skills to communicate well. They use these purposefully in their lessons when explaining their thoughts and ideas. For example, pupils make effective use of talking partners to enhance their thinking and learning.

Nearly all pupils in the foundation phase develop effective reading skills. They participate well in story reading activities. They are beginning to develop their skills of reading for different purposes effectively. By the end of the phase, many pupils read accurately and display a secure understanding of what they have read. Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 continue to make good progress in the development of their reading skills over time. Most read with fluency and expression. They talk enthusiastically about the books they read and make informed decisions about book choices. More able pupils develop their scanning and skimming skills well when interviewed about book characters that they admire, for example when talking about Miss Potts in 'Mallory Towers'.

Foundation phase pupils begin to form a minority of letters correctly and write an increasing range of sentences competently, for example when writing basic questions to ask a dragon. By Year 2, many write confidently and vary their sentences sensibly to create suitable effects in their work, but they write little at length. Across key stage 2, most pupils develop their work interestingly across a wide range of writing forms, for example one Year 4 pupil wrote, 'On Tenby beach you can see the sea crashing against the shore, you can hear the roaring ocean washing the glittering golden sands'. Many pupils write at length making effective use of different genres. Pupils produce writing that creates purposeful effects on the reader, for example when a Year 5 pupil wrote about a character who was 'stressed, worried, and troubled as she typed frantically'.

Nearly all pupils develop their number skills effectively across the school. By the end of the foundation phase, most understand place value up to a hundred well and use this knowledge effectively to carry out addition and subtraction calculations. Mathematical skills develop well throughout key stage 2 where nearly all pupils order decimal numbers and use fractions confidently. They use a suitable range of graphs and charts and interrogate the data effectively.

Nearly all pupils, including the SRB pupils, apply their numeracy and literacy skills effectively in a range of subjects across the school.

Most pupils develop strong speaking and listening skills in Welsh. They respond well to the regular use of bilingual commands and conversations initiated by teachers. Across the school, most pupils develop suitable reading skills in Welsh, reading simple texts with a level of understanding that is appropriate for their age and ability. Overall, pupils of all ages recognise the importance of learning Welsh in order to become members of a bilingual society. In the foundation phase, pupils ask and answer simple questions such as 'sut wyt ti?' and join in with daily routines with enthusiasm. In key stage 2, most pupils continue to build their Welsh oracy skills well. The work of the 'Crew Cymraeg' in promoting Welsh speaking throughout the school is particularly effective. Once a week they host a Welsh assembly where they ask the pupils questions, such as where they live and what they like.

Nearly all pupils are beginning to develop effective information and communication technology (ICT) skills that support their wider learning well. For example, many pupils in the foundation phase use tablet computers effectively to access reading material, to research topics or take photographs. Pupils build on these skills effectively as they progress through key stage 2. Pupils acting as digital leaders support pupils' digital learning well throughout the stage. For example, they recently supported pupils to write book reviews of their favourite books. This enabled pupils, teachers and parents to access the short synopsis of each book by clicking on a copy of the book's cover. Older key stage 2 pupils make effective use of their coding skills to create games and self-assess the effectiveness of their programs. They also produced virtual reality files, containing 360 degree photographs of various landmarks in Wales. For example, using virtual reality goggles, pupils can experience what it is like walking along the front overlooking Tenby harbour from the safety of their own classroom.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Nearly all pupils develop strong attitudes and behaviours that help them to learn well. They are proud of their school, talk enthusiastically about their learning and enjoy the topics they study. When pupils receive appropriately challenging work, they respond positively. Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and know whom to approach if they have any concerns. They are confident that staff will respond promptly to any concerns they may have. Pupils across the school have a sound understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and the importance of making healthy choices in relation to food and physical activity. For example, many pupils select healthy options of fruit and water from the 'Snack Shack' during break times.

Nearly all pupils behave consistently well in lessons and around the school. They are kind and caring towards each other and show strong levels of co-operation. They are considerate when listening to the views of others and share their own thoughts and ideas readily. They treat adults and visitors with respect and courtesy and are very willing to discuss their work and successes with visitors confidently. As a result of special assemblies on the rights of the child, many pupils discuss important values well.

Most pupils take their responsibilities seriously and embrace the leadership opportunities that they receive. For example, members of different pupil councils represent their peers maturely and keep other pupils well informed. The 'Deri Detectives' and eco council are influential in developing aspects of the school's provision, such as the 'Snack Shack'.

Pupils are aware of the need to attend school regularly and punctually. Attendance is improving steadily this year, and no pupils have been persistently absent over recent years. However, the overall improvement is from a relatively low base.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

Successful teaching across the school ensures a positive working relationship between pupils, teachers and learning assistants. This leads to effective co-operation and develops pupils' enthusiasm towards their learning well. In many cases, learning proceeds at an appropriate pace and teachers give pupils engaging activities that encourage them to learn and to stay focused for extended periods. In most classes, teachers ensure that there is clear direction and focus on what the pupils need to achieve within the lesson.

Nearly all teachers prepare stimulating learning activities to meet the wide needs of pupils within each class. However, on a few occasions, the level of challenge is not always successful in ensuring that more able pupils reach their full potential. Across the school, the quality of teachers' questioning and verbal feedback to pupils as they carry out tasks in formal and informal situations is good. Teachers share learning objectives and success criteria with pupils at the beginning of lessons. This enables pupils to understand the purpose of the learning. Nearly all teachers allow pupils time and opportunities to assess the quality of their work and that of their peers

Learning support staff throughout the school collaborate well with teachers and help to ensure that pupils make progress and improve their work. All staff are good language role models. They incorporate everyday Welsh regularly in classrooms and around the school successfully. There are sound opportunities for pupils to speak and write Welsh. All teachers' planning include a Welsh thread, for example, studying the physical features of Wales as part of this term's geography focus 'Cwl Cymru'.

Pupils work on the local area entitled 'Deri Ni' earned them recognition in the Welsh schools heritage awards in 2016. They researched the schools, places of worship, the railway, the pits and the Darren disaster. Along these trails there are 'i beacons', which visitors can access via their smart phone. This gives them descriptions of the various areas. These were researched by the pupils of Deri school and provide an interesting insight as to how Deri was in the last century when coal was king.

The principles of the foundation phase have been established successfully. Teachers provide interesting focus tasks and continuous provision for pupils, which include beneficial opportunities for them to write for different purposes, for example drafting a play script re-telling the story of 'Gelert'.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. An engaging whole-school curriculum based on topics, such as 'Out of this World' and 'Cwl Cymru', provide valuable contexts for pupils to develop and apply their skills in real-life situations. Teachers have linked the recently purchased mathematics scheme purposefully to the four principles of the new curriculum using special characters. Pupils are beginning to make specific reference to these characters as part of their learning, for example in the foundation phase pupils often comment that they work collaboratively very much like 'Resilient Dexter'. The school provides cohesive, well-planned

opportunities for all pupils, including those in the SRB, to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through specific lessons and in other areas of learning. Enrichment activities, such as 'Come Dine With Me', provide engaging opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in mathematics, language, expressive arts, humanities, health and wellbeing, science and ICT.

Long term planning with respect to mapping out appropriate coverage of the numeracy and literacy framework, ICT skills and the digital competency framework are effective and comprehensive. Teachers give careful thought to the way topics are developed and engage the pupils well right from the start. The cycle of topics allows purposeful development of science and ICT skills and allows a good balance in experience of the humanities and arts. It provides a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils with due attention to pupils' social and emotional development.

In the foundation phase, teachers make effective use of the indoor space available to them. However, planning for use of the outdoor areas to enhance pupils' experiences is limited overall.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school provides a high level of support for all pupils. They benefit from strong working relationships with all staff. All staff use the school's behaviour management system ('STRIPE') effectively and this contributes well to high standards of behaviour across the school. There are effective systems to track and monitor individual pupil progress and wellbeing, identifying those in need of additional support, and providing appropriate intervention programmes where required. However, monitoring of pupil progress within the SRB and the school's intervention programmes is underdeveloped.

The school engages with parents and the local community very well. Parents appreciate regular opportunities to celebrate their children's learning, for example through events such as 'Come Dine with Me' and 'Create-off' activities. There are strong links with the local library, which supports the school with pupil workshops to develop pupils' research skills and to help them to learn more about local history.

The school promotes healthy eating and encourages parents to pack healthy lunchboxes for their children. A dental hygiene programme encourages foundation phase pupils to clean their teeth daily.

The school has active pupil groups that contribute to decision-making within the school, for example, 'Deri Detectives' who monitor healthy eating and keep the school premises tidy. The eco committee encourages pupils to create an environmentally friendly space through recycling, saving energy and their litter patrol initiative. They also raise awareness of global issues, such as the human impact on endangered species, and they use the sale of their home-grown produce to raise funds for chosen charitable causes. Pupils have a good awareness of helping others, with older pupils keen to ensure decision-making helps younger pupils, for example through the purchase of additional recreational play equipment.

The school has a beneficial programme of visitors as part of its 'Job of the Month' initiative, providing role models that encourage pupils to have high aspirations for



their future careers. Teachers provide useful opportunities for pupils to improve their physical and creative skills through a range of extra-curricular provision. For example, foundation phase pupils enhance their imaginative skills by attending a weekly creative club.

The school provides good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their spiritual, moral and ethical beliefs. For example, in collective worship, pupils make effective use of the reflection wall to respond to key moral messages.

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

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The headteacher has established a clear vision for the school which focuses on supporting pupils' wellbeing and raising standards. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and leader of the foundation phase provide strong direction to the school's work and promote high expectations for all staff and pupils. As a result, nearly all staff feel valued and share the school's vision.

All teachers and learning support assistants work conscientiously within a supportive and collaborative environment. They have a secure knowledge of their roles and responsibilities, with every teacher being responsible for a curriculum area.

Senior leaders provide purposeful opportunities for professional development of all staff. These link closely to performance management objectives and the priorities in the school development plan. For example, the deputy headteacher has recently undertaken training and assessment for headship and another member of staff attends a college-based training course on the foundation phase.

- The staff in the SRB work well as part of a learning community and respond positively to advice from external stakeholders. Effective partnership arrangements with other resource bases is developing well. Both staff and pupils benefit from these arrangements. For example, the sharing of good practice has encouraged pupils' participation in a sensory circuit. However, the interface between the day-to-day management of the SRB and the rest of the school is not always as effective as it could be.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They meet regularly and undertake their statutory duties well. Many visit the school and meet staff and pupils to enhance their understanding of the curriculum. They are aware of the areas targeted for improvement, but are less sure about current national priorities. They receive regular presentations from pupils to update them on learning experiences that take place in the school. For example, representatives from the various elected groups recently gave a presentation about the working practices within the school and shared their ideas for recycling and the importance of being ecologically aware. There is an appropriate range of expertise within the governing body to benefit the school, particularly in the area of finance. However, its role as a critical friend to the school is at an early stage of development.

The school's self-evaluation processes enable leaders and managers to gain a clear and evaluative picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. There is a strong correlation between the outcomes of self-evaluation and the priorities within the school development plan, which focuses clearly on raising standards and developing provision effectively across the school. However, there is limited monitoring of new strategies undertaken to bring about improved pupil outcomes to check that they are achieving the desired effect. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work closely with the challenge adviser and respond purposefully to recommendations in order to maintain progress. For example, they have undertaken joint monitoring exercises in order to agree on the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

Partnerships with the local community and industry are strong. The effective links with senior citizens from the nearby sheltered housing complex has produced a series of e books based on their recollections. Local industry has been invaluable in supporting the work of the SRB through the purchase of specialist resources.

The headteacher, staff and governors consider the budget conscientiously and ensure spending reflects the priorities for improvement. Currently, the school is carrying forward a healthy surplus but leaders have taken account of this appropriately in the school's three-year financial plan where the surplus offsets the reduction in funding from a predicted fall in pupil numbers. Effective use of the Small rural Schools Grant has enhanced provision in the foundation phase, especially for nursery pupils. The school uses the pupil deprivation grant appropriately to support the learning of vulnerable pupils via intervention programmes that have led to raising standards and attendance levels.

The outdoor environment is appealing, but, apart from pupils in the SRB, staff make limited use of the outdoors in the foundation phase. Staff and pupils have created an attractive indoor learning environment that promotes exciting learning opportunities for all pupils. Staff make good use of the school building to support pupils' learning.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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

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