



Report summary for parents and carers on Deighton Primary School

Date of inspection: December 2023

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

Main evaluation

Leaders, staff and governors of Deighton Primary have worked effectively as a community to develop an inclusive school focused on raising aspirations for all pupils and developing them as resilient, lifelong learners. Relationships between pupils and adults are strong, and the school's partnership with parents is outstanding. Most pupils behave well, and are friendly, courteous and respectful. The support for pupils with additional learning needs, and those who are vulnerable, is effective. In particular, pupils appreciate the high-quality care and support when they experience social and emotional difficulties. Nearly all feel safe. They are confident that leaders and staff will look after them whenever they need their help.

The school provides a stimulating, engaging and nurturing learning environment for all pupils. This supports many to make suitable or better progress, often from very low starting points. The youngest pupils settle well into daily routines and benefit from the many purposeful opportunities, indoors and outside, that help them to explore, problem-solve, and develop their language and physical skills successfully. Most pupils make strong progress in developing their social and communication skills. They listen well to adults and, by Year 6, many enjoy drama activities, collaborate effectively and discuss their learning activities confidently.

Cameo: Enriching pupils' lives through cultural experiences

There is strong provision for pupils' cultural and social development. Leaders use grant funding to enrich pupils' lives with learning opportunities they might not otherwise experience. For example, they fly to Scotland to visit heritage sites, and travel to London to watch a theatre show, as part of their 'We're off to see the wizard' topic. After this, collaboration with professional musicians and a local theatre company helps to develop pupils' creative skills, their appreciation of the performing arts and raises their aspirations about possible future careers.

Staff provide a wide range of authentic learning experiences and capture pupils' interests by giving them carefully considered opportunities to influence what they learn. Older pupils develop their independent learning and creative skills well through making choices about how they learn or present their work. This includes Year 6 pupils having the freedom to explore how to convey values, such as empathy and compassion, in their artwork as part of Remembrance Day reflections on the consequences of war. While pupils use digital technology well to support their learning across the curriculum, their understanding and use of graphs and databases is less well developed.

Provision for the progressive development of pupils' mathematical and reading skills is effective. Both have been a focus for improvement in recent years and staff have benefited from the school's weekly professional learning programme to support the development of their skills and knowledge. This has made a positive difference to pupils' progress in the different areas of mathematics, with most developing their understanding well. They solve problems appropriately and apply useful strategies to carry out mental calculations and check their work. Staff have been successful in developing a positive culture of reading that helps most pupils to become competent readers. However, many pupils' writing skills are underdeveloped. Older pupils still make basic errors and their letter formation is often poor. Very few pupils write independently at length or with suitable depth.

In many cases, teaching provides an appropriate level of support and challenge for pupils' learning. However, in a few classes, it does not meet pupils' needs well enough. On occasions, staff tend to direct younger pupils' learning too much, and this limits the opportunities for them to learn independently. In older classes, where pupils do not have secure literacy skills, or where tasks are not sufficiently challenging, a few pupils lose focus and make limited progress.

Teachers provide useful feedback during lesson 'pit stops' that help to reinforce learning or address misconceptions. However, in writing activities, feedback to individual pupils often focuses too narrowly. This limits the opportunity for them to make meaningful improvements to the quality of their work or to discuss their learning and next steps in depth.

The headteacher provides effective leadership and has high expectations for pupils' learning and well-being. Leaders, including governors, have successfully established a happy and calm school community, based on a respectful team ethos. The school runs efficiently and communication is a strength. This contributes strongly to its robust safeguarding practices. During the past few years, parental engagement in school life has increased substantially.

Cameo: Building parental engagement in school life

The headteacher places great importance on staff communicating and working with parents and carers, as partners in their children's education. A few years ago, parental engagement with the school was limited so leaders adapted their approach, developing a programme of social events and fun activities that pupils and parents could enjoy together. For example, on 'Come and Do' curriculum days, parents and pupils learn circus skills together as part of the school's 'This is me' topic. Staff ensure that the school is a welcoming space and this helps to develop positive relationships within the school community. Most parents now feel comfortable to take part in social and learning experiences in the school and nearly all attend meetings to discuss their children's learning and progress.

A positive culture of continuous improvement and reflection is developing well in the school. By taking part in purposeful self-evaluation activities, leaders and staff have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, at times, monitoring processes do not focus well enough on identifying whether the actions the school has taken have had a positive impact on developing the quality of teaching or pupils' skills.

The school's strategic planning takes good account of national priorities, such as developing pupils' Welsh language skills. Leaders know that while younger pupils develop suitable skills in listening and speaking, older pupils' ability to use the Welsh language is limited and they are working to address this. Leaders, staff and governors work together well to keep strategic decisions under review to ensure these are in pupils' best interests. For example, the school organised the learning week with a combination of longer and shorter days for pupils. It has realised that this arrangement has had a negative impact on the attendance of a minority of pupils, especially for those who are eligible for free school meals and pupils with additional learning needs. The attendance of pupils in these groups is notably lower than that of their peers.

Recommendations and next steps

We have made 3 recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1** Ensure that improvement processes and professional learning drive improvements to the quality of teaching and assessment to meet pupils' learning needs
- R2** Improve pupils' writing skills
- R3** Improve attendance, particularly for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those with additional learning needs

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

Statutory compliance

Safeguarding arrangements

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

Healthy eating and drinking

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

School finances

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances appropriately, including use of the pupil development grant.

Health and safety (site security)

The school's arrangements for site security do not give any cause for concern.

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