



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

**A report on**

**The John Frost School  
Lighthouse Road  
Duffryn  
Newport  
NP10 8YD**

**Date of inspection: March 2020**

**by**

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

## About The John Frost School

The John Frost School is an 11 to 18 mixed comprehensive school, serving the south-western part of Newport, and is maintained by Newport City Council. The school was previously known as Duffryn High School. There are 1,207 pupils on roll, including 95 in the sixth form, which is slightly higher than at the time of the last inspection in February 2014.

Around 26% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is higher than the Wales average of 16.4% for secondary schools. Just over half the pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales. Around 40% of pupils are from a minority-ethnic or mixed-race background and a third come from homes where English is not the main language. Very few pupils speak Welsh as their first language.

About 27% of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, which is higher than the national average of 22.2%. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is 2.8% compared with 2.2% for Wales as a whole.

The school has a local authority run specialist teaching facility for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. There are currently 20 pupils in this facility.

The headteacher took up his post in September 2017. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, one deputy headteacher and four assistant headteachers.

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

The John Frost School is a caring community that provides a calm and purposeful learning environment for pupils and staff alike. Pupils are welcoming and friendly, and convey a strong sense of pride in their school. They behave well in lessons and around the school, and the majority make secure progress in their learning.

Most teachers nurture positive working relationships with pupils and many have secure subject knowledge. In the majority of lessons, teachers provide helpful activities and clear explanations. However, in general teachers do not develop pupils' thinking or independent skills well enough. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not adapt activities sufficiently to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities.

The school provides high quality care, support and guidance and promotes tolerance and respect successfully. This ensures that the diverse needs of the school community are met effectively. Pupils are supported well and enabled to develop as caring, well-informed citizens.

Leaders provide a clear sense of direction for the school. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well and prioritise wisely. There is a tangible sense of common purpose amongst staff and a strong ethos of teamwork. Staff feel well supported and benefit from a worthwhile programme of professional learning activities.

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

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Improve pupils' standards, particularly their speaking, writing and information and communication technology skills
- R2 Improve teaching and assessment
- R3 Strengthen the work of the school council
- R4 Improve the effectiveness of a minority of middle leaders
- R5 Ensure that reports to parents meet statutory requirements

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### **Standards: Adequate and needs improvement**

During their time at the school, the majority of pupils make secure progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills, and achieve well in external examinations. They have secure recall of prior learning, apply this well to new situations and make sound progress. A minority of pupils do not make sufficient progress or apply their prior learning well enough.

Most pupils listen attentively and with respect to teachers and their peers, and follow teachers' instructions promptly. The majority of pupils answer questions readily, giving sensible answers. They speak clearly and make appropriate use of subject specific vocabulary. A few offer detailed, considered responses and explain their viewpoints well, such as when they discuss the effect of temperature on the rate of chemical reaction in science lessons. A minority of pupils lack confidence when speaking to adults or speaking publicly, and a few are reluctant to contribute to class discussions.

Many younger pupils are enthusiastic readers who settle quickly to read books and engage purposefully with these texts. When reading aloud, the majority of pupils do so competently. Many pupils are able to locate relevant information in a range of reading texts well and have a sound understanding of basic meaning. The majority of pupils analyse texts appropriately, demonstrating a good understanding of the writer's intention and a secure grasp of technical terminology, such as in English lessons when they discuss the impact of persuasive language devices in an article promoting the benefits of travel. A few pupils analyse texts perceptively and with maturity, employing sophisticated vocabulary. The majority of pupils make effective use of a range of reading strategies in their lessons across the curriculum. For example, in geography they apply their reading strategies to understand new terminology related to over-population, as well as its causes and effects. The majority of pupils synthesise information from a variety of sources successfully. However, a minority of pupils struggle to apply reading strategies in order to understand unfamiliar words or texts.

When writing, many pupils communicate clearly and organise their work appropriately by using paragraphs. For example, Year 7 pupils write well-organised extended pieces describing changes in castle building over time in history lessons. The majority write at length competently and employ a variety of sentence types to add colour and variety to their writing, such as when Year 9 pupils write letters to leading supermarkets to persuade them to reduce their use of plastic. However, a minority of pupils use too many simple sentences. The majority of pupils have a sound basic vocabulary and, when introduced to new vocabulary, apply this effectively. In general, however, they lack a sufficiently broad and rich vocabulary. The majority of pupils' written work is technically secure on the whole but a minority frequently misspell common words, do not punctuate their work correctly and misuse capital letters. The majority of pupils write suitably for a range of purposes and audiences, although overall they do not develop their creative writing skills well enough.

Many pupils add, subtract, multiply and divide accurately when solving problems and carrying out simple algebraic operations. They are competent when drawing graphs to display data and identify a suitable scale for the x and y axes, such as when they analyse birth and death rates across the world in geography. In relevant subjects across the curriculum, many pupils apply their numeracy skills well in context. For example, in technology they apply their knowledge of scales and measurement to design and build a model of roof trusses. However, overall, pupils do not practise their numeracy skills to solve real life problems often enough.

Many pupils make appropriate use of basic information communication technology (ICT) skills for word processing tasks and for producing simple spreadsheets and presentations. However, in general, pupils do not develop or practise their ICT skills well enough or frequently enough across the curriculum.

In a few subjects, pupils develop their creative and thinking skills well. For example, in drama lessons they apply their prior knowledge of tragi-comedies to produce their own tragi-comic plays based on modern day situations. In technology lessons, pupils listen to different styles of music and design chairs to reflect the mood of each musical piece. However, overall pupils do not develop these skills well enough due to a lack of opportunities across the curriculum. Pupils develop their physical skills suitably and participate enthusiastically in physical education lessons and extra-curricular sporting activities.

Over the last three years, pupils' performance at the end of key stage 4 has been variable. Performance in 2019 is in line with expectation in around half of indicators but below in around half. Many pupils are entered for the skills challenge certificate qualification. The performance of boys generally compares well with that of boys in similar schools. However, overall the performance of girls and pupils eligible for free school meals does not compare favourably with that of their counterparts in similar schools. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress. At the end of Year 11, nearly all pupils remain in education, employment or training.

In 2019 most pupils were entered for a qualification in Welsh and a minority achieved a level 2 qualification. In Welsh lessons, a majority of pupils write appropriately, using a suitable range of tenses, such as when they write emails and letters stating their concerns about the environment. However, pupils do not practise their spoken Welsh often enough.

Over the three years from 2017-2019, the proportion of sixth form pupils gaining three A\*-C and three A\*-A grades at A level or equivalent generally does not compare well with levels in similar schools. The proportion who complete their courses and achieve at least three level 3 qualifications is broadly in line with the national average but retention from Year 12 to Year 13 is lower than the national average. Analysis of pupil grades shows that, overall, pupils do not make as much progress as pupils with similar levels of prior attainment.

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

Pupils are proud to be members of the school community. Most are polite and friendly and behave well, both in lessons and around the school.

Most pupils arrive punctually to lessons, engage readily in tasks and sustain concentration well. They display a positive attitude to learning and work diligently to complete tasks. When given the opportunity, most work well in pairs such as discussing in history how to fortify their castle and in groups when, for example during science lessons, measuring the effect of acid on marble chips. Most listen attentively to each other and to the teacher. They are courteous and respectful to staff and visitors to the school. However, the poor behaviour of a few pupils hampers their own progress.

Many feel safe at school and think that the school deals well with the few instances of bullying. Although pupils raised concerns about bullying and the school's response to incidents in inspection questionnaires, these issues were not confirmed by pupils during the inspection week.

Those pupils who take on leadership roles make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. For example, pupils have established support groups such as the Pride group, and sports ambassadors lead extra-curricular clubs. The digital leaders help pupils and staff to develop their digital skills and pupils with additional learning needs have organised a coffee morning for their parents. The school council is developing its work and has influenced changes, such as those to the school uniform.

Many pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep healthy through diet and exercise. Around a half of pupils participate in at least one sporting activity every week.

Pupils have a sound understanding of the ethical issues facing the world and show strong levels of respect and tolerance. For example, pupils celebrate cultural diversity through their participation in National Hijab day. They show care and concern for others through charity initiatives such as the annual Macmillan coffee morning and a cake sale to support World Autism Awareness week.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement**

Most teachers develop supportive working relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour very well. They establish beneficial classroom routines within a calm and purposeful learning environment. Many teachers have secure subject knowledge and use praise well to motivate pupils.

In a few lessons, teaching is particularly effective and pupils make especially strong progress. In these lessons, teachers plan tasks carefully to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They challenge pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. These teachers use questioning skilfully to deepen pupils' understanding and encourage them to think further. They monitor pupils' progress effectively and intervene well.

In the majority of lessons, teachers plan suitable activities and prepare resources that are both interesting and purposeful. In these lessons, teachers give clear instructions and explanations. They ensure that there is an appropriate balance between activities led by the teacher and opportunities for pupils to work independently or in small groups to consolidate their learning. However, in general, these teachers do not develop pupils' thinking skills well enough. For example, they give pupils too much help or overly structure tasks.

In a minority of lessons, teachers do not provide a suitable level of challenge for pupils of different abilities, particularly those who are less able. In these lessons, teachers provide activities that keep pupils busy but do not challenge them or develop their learning sufficiently.

Many teachers question pupils appropriately to determine their knowledge and recall. However, teachers' questioning overall is not sufficiently probing and does not deepen pupils' learning well enough.

The majority of teachers provide useful verbal feedback in lessons and monitor pupils' progress well. They also offer well-considered written comments and advice that help pupils to improve their work. The majority of teachers set beneficial personalised questions and tasks to help pupils to improve specific aspects of their work. In the majority of cases, teachers monitor and respond to pupils' responses suitably. However, in a minority of cases, these tasks are too generic and not focused suitably on improving pupils' skills. A few teachers offer superficial feedback that is not sufficiently precise or helpful to pupils to improve their work.

The school provides a curriculum that addresses the needs of pupils of all abilities suitably. In key stage 4 and in the sixth form, the school offers pupils appropriate and flexible academic and vocational pathways. These courses provide beneficial opportunities for all pupils to gain a valuable range of qualifications suited to their needs. The school works closely with its partner primary schools to ensure that the key stage 3 curriculum builds successfully on pupils' previous learning. The school has started to research and trial teaching and learning strategies to prepare for the Curriculum for Wales.

The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities and qualifications that enhance learning purposefully. This includes beneficial opportunities for pupils to take qualifications in the wide variety of home languages spoken. There are helpful opportunities to develop pupils' learning and experiences outside the classroom, such as a geography trip to Caerphilly castle and a music visit to St. David's Hall. More able and talented pupils have valuable opportunities to broaden their horizons through university and business workshops.

The school's provision for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is strong. The school employs beneficial strategies to promote reading for pleasure and to improve pupils' basic writing skills, including their use of paragraphs and connectives. The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in relevant contexts. Further, the times tables for life strategy promotes pupils' numerical fluency successfully. The school tracks the progress of pupils with weak literacy and numeracy skills closely and implements a suitable programme of interventions to support their progress. Leaders evaluate the impact of these interventions thoroughly. The school's planning for the development of pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum is at an early stage. However, currently, opportunities for pupils to develop these skills are limited.

Provision for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills both within lessons and across the curriculum is appropriate. The school also promotes Welsh culture and heritage suitably, for example through the 'Proud to be Welsh' project, Welsh Week, Criw Cymraeg and an annual Eisteddfod. The school also promotes successfully pupils' sense of pride in their local heritage through raising awareness of the work of the Newport chartist movement.

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

The school is an inclusive community that promotes tolerance and respect amongst its pupils effectively. It has developed successfully a calm and purposeful working atmosphere where most pupils behave well, are considerate of others and have a positive attitude to their learning.

A significant strength is the highly effective work over recent years to improve the behaviour and attitudes to learning of pupils. Nearly all staff are consistent in their application of the school's behaviour policy in classrooms and around the school. The pupils are well aware of the consequences if they disrupt learning, are late for lessons or behave in an anti-social way around the site. As a result, most pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school, and the attitudes to learning of most pupils are very positive.

The school monitors attendance carefully and this constant and consistent focus has resulted in improved attendance and a reduction in the number of persistent non-attenders. The school has suitable systems to deal with any instances of bullying.

The school has detailed systems to monitor and track the progress of all pupils and identify pupils who are at risk of underachieving. This allows the school to target these pupils with appropriate support, including mentoring, emotional, health and social support. This has a positive impact on their progress and wellbeing. The school has a valuable points system to record both positive attitudes to learning and behavioural incidents in lessons. Referrals to the school's behaviour room are monitored and analysed carefully. This enables staff at all levels to offer additional, appropriate support to pupils as required. However, work set for pupils spending short periods in the behaviour room is not consistently appropriate.

There is a range of beneficial additional support available to help pupils. This includes family engagement, attendance and intervention support officers, alternative learning provisions on and off site, the learning support base, external agencies, including mental health services, and the pastoral team.

Pupils with special educational needs are identified and supported well. Helpful individual development plans are shared with staff and parents. However, their use within the planning of lessons for pupils with special educational needs is inconsistent.

Transition arrangements are very effective and provide particularly valuable support for the most vulnerable pupils. The 'nurture group' for Year 7 and Year 8 pupils provides a safe, yet aspirational environment and allows pupils with special educational needs to settle quickly.

The special needs resource base for pupils with autism provides a high level of sensitive, personalised and caring support for pupils from across Newport. This enables these pupils to integrate successfully into school life. The base provides a purposeful learning environment and a quiet, calm space for pupils where they can play board games and socialise during lunch and break times.

The school promotes productive relationships with parents through a range of initiatives such as praise assemblies and parent engagement evenings to help parents to support their children's learning and wellbeing. Interim reports provide parents with useful information regarding their child's progress. However, the school is not meeting its statutory duty to provide annual written reports to communicate areas of strengths and clear targets for improvement.

Throughout the school, staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to understand the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle through exercise and an appropriate diet. The personal and social education programme includes useful units on diet and nutrition, and health and physical activity. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Pupils are able to take part in a suitable range of sporting and fitness activities in the curriculum, and at lunchtime and after school. Around half of pupils are enthusiastic participants in sports, such as football, basketball, multi-skills and netball.

The school has beneficial provision to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. This provision also assists pupils to explore and develop their understanding of issues related to diversity, tolerance and respect for others. It includes an effective personal and social education programme, the anti-bullying policy and practice, assemblies, visits and specific events. For example, pupils took part in a concert to raise awareness of a local mental health charity. At lunchtime and after school there is a suitable range of activities to meet pupils' sporting and cultural interests. In addition, the Pride group and 'You Are Not Alone' group provide pupils with emotional and social support. Pupils have useful opportunities to contribute to local charities, for example through raising awareness about autism on National Autism Day. These opportunities contribute effectively to the development of pupils as considerate, ethical and informed citizens.

Pupils have a suitable range of opportunities to show leadership, prepare for adult life and develop as active citizens, for example through their membership of the school council, as sports ambassadors and digital leaders. The school council members have been given worthwhile opportunities to contribute to whole school improvements such as changes to the school canteen as well as the implementation of gender neutral toilets. However, pupils do not have the opportunity to elect members and the council does not operate independently enough. There is an appropriate programme to provide pupils with advice and guidance when choosing subjects or planning careers.

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

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

The headteacher provides secure, well-respected leadership. He demonstrates a strong commitment to placing learning and respect at the heart of the school so that pupils and staff can flourish and succeed. Since his appointment in 2017, he has established a clear vision for the school which includes well understood strategic aims. This vision of seizing every opportunity to enable young people to be the best they can be is embraced fully by staff, governors, pupils and parents. Leadership at all levels contributes strongly to securing positive pupil behaviour and attitudes to

learning, as well as high quality care, support and guidance. However, leadership has not had sufficient impact on the standards pupils achieve or the quality of teaching.

The headteacher, the leadership team and the governing body work together well and share a heartfelt commitment to ensuring the realisation of the school's aims. Senior leaders' responsibilities are shared equitably and are understood well by all staff. There is a palpable sense of common purpose amongst staff and a strong ethos of team working and collaboration. A notable feature is that staff feel listened to and that their contributions are valued.

Senior leaders hold middle leaders to account well and provide a suitable balance between challenge and support. Clear line-management structures with regular, timetabled meetings and focused common agenda items ensure that there is consistency in approach, but there is also flexibility to reflect differences within areas of responsibility.

The school has developed comprehensive and rigorous processes to review and improve the school's work. Leaders have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Middle and senior leaders evaluate pupil outcomes robustly and use a wide range of first hand evidence to evaluate their work and identify strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders use this information effectively to inform planning at whole school and departmental level. Departmental priorities support well the whole school priorities. However, activities to gather evidence do not always focus sufficiently on the impact on pupils' standards and skills.

Many middle leaders fulfil their roles and responsibilities well and make a positive contribution to delivering the school's priorities for improvement. They have a secure grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility. However, a minority of middle leaders are not sufficiently effective in their work.

Arrangements for managing the performance of staff are effective and enable teachers to reflect on their own practice and identify areas for development successfully. Performance management objectives relate directly to the school's improvement priorities and support individual professional development well.

The school has a purposeful culture and ethos to support the professional learning of all staff. Beneficial opportunities are provided for middle leaders to shadow senior leaders and this contributes well to strengthening the capacity of the schools' leadership. Teachers observe each other habitually and share good practice through regular 'tools for teaching' workshops. This promotes the sharing of good practice successfully and supports a culture of continuous professional learning well. In addition, the school has established valuable and helpful links with other schools, including partner primary schools, to broaden effective practice in areas such as the provision for Welsh language and the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The engagement of staff with the comprehensive range of professional learning opportunities contributes well to the developing culture of reflection and research informed practice.

The governing body demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting all aspects of the school's work. Governors are experienced and provide useful challenge to the school. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through the information provided and regularly undertake training with senior leaders in order to discharge their roles effectively.

The school manages its resources well. The headteacher, business manager and the chair of the finance committee monitor expenditure rigorously and effectively, and the school has recorded appropriate budget surpluses for the last five years. The school makes effective use of grants such as the Pupil Development Grant to support the wellbeing of vulnerable pupils. However, overall, there has not been sufficient impact on the outcomes of pupils eligible for free school meals at key stage 4.

The school deploys staff strategically and uses its resources effectively to reinforce the school's vision and priorities. Over the last few years, the school has invested its surpluses wisely. For example leaders have ensured that older buildings provide a stimulating and supportive learning environment. The school is well maintained and regular upkeep has created an environment that is conducive to learning.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent 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 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' wellbeing, 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

## 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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court, Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

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