

A report on

Alderman Davies C.I.W. School

**St David's Street
Neath
SA11 3AA**

Date of inspection: June 2025

by

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

About Alderman Davies C.I.W. School

Name of provider	Alderman Davies C.I.W. School
Local authority	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Church in Wales
Number of pupils on roll	285
Pupils of statutory school age	231
Number in nursery classes	33
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 22.9%)	22.3%
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 11.1%)	3.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	3.5%
Date of headteacher appointment	08/04/2024

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	22/01/2017
Start date of inspection	16/06/2025

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

Alderman Davies CIW School promotes a kind, supportive and nurturing environment successfully. The headteacher provides strong leadership through clear communication and strategic direction for school improvement. Alongside other school leaders, she fosters a strong culture of care and respect, ensuring that pupils feel safe, secure and happy at school.

Leaders have developed a curriculum that is dynamic, interesting and bespoke to the community. This has had a positive impact on attendance and pupil engagement. As a result, most pupils make good progress, as they move through the school. Nearly all pupils feel proud of their school and talk with enthusiasm about their lessons and learning. However, feedback does not focus consistently enough on improving and extending pupils' learning.

The school's provision for expressive arts is a strength. Nearly all pupils benefit from a range of authentic artistic and musical experiences, including the use of local artists and multimedia collages. As a result, most pupils develop as ethical and creative learners well. However, there are limited opportunities in all curriculum areas for pupils to work independently.

The school's approach to social and emotional literacy is a strength, having a positive impact on the well-being and engagement of targeted pupils. For example, a woodland schools initiative has provided pupils with the opportunity to develop their emotional literacy and social skills, alongside a tailored sensory approach to help pupils regulate and engage effectively with their learning.

A range of pupil voice groups provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills. Y Senedd have worked closely with school leaders to develop a new vision, which is visible and meaningful around the school. Pupils take pride in embracing responsibilities, such as participating in the Safety Squad, Criw Cymraeg and other leadership roles.

Staff have strong and useful relationships with the wider community, including parents. Parents feel listened to and grateful for the leadership of the school.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Provide further opportunities for pupils to work independently
- R2 Ensure that feedback is used consistently to improve and extend learning

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

The headteacher sets high expectations and has developed a clear strategic direction for the school, based on its strong ethos. Through the school's mission statement Empowering all through Christ's love, pupils display values of courtesy, compassion and understanding across all areas of the curriculum and daily school life. These attributes enable most pupils to develop as ambitious and ethical learners. The headteacher, with the support of leaders, has developed useful systems to evaluate the school's provision effectively. Staff take ownership of different curriculum areas, reviewing a broad range of information accurately to identify the school's strengths and areas for further development.

Leaders foster a caring and inclusive environment where both pupils and staff feel valued and supported. This nurturing atmosphere contributes significantly to pupils' overall well-being, helping them feel safe, secure, and happy to attend school each day. Staff members are approachable and attentive, creating strong, trusting relationships with pupils. Inclusive practices ensure that every child, regardless of background or need, feels a sense of belonging. As a result, pupils are confident and engaged in their learning, and show kindness and respect towards one another.

The majority of pupils start nursery school with personal, social and communication skills at the level expected for their age. From their starting points, most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress in their learning as they move across the school.

Senior leaders have worked collaboratively and successfully with stakeholders to develop a shared vision for the school's new curriculum. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and gives all pupils the opportunity to make progress in developing their skills and knowledge, through meaningful and authentic learning experiences.

In many cases, teachers provide pupils with appropriate levels of challenge and support. The consistent use of clear success criteria, through well-planned lessons, helps most pupils gain a sound understanding of their own strengths and areas for development in their learning. However, in a few cases there is insufficient challenge, and over-direction from adults limits pupils' opportunities to develop independence in their learning.

Over time, most pupils make strong progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. Many younger pupils use an increasing range of vocabulary to describe their emotions. As they progress through the year groups, most pupils speak with increasing confidence, using a wide range of vocabulary. Many of the youngest pupils use greetings in Welsh successfully, while many older pupils respond to a broad range of sentence patterns, using the present and past tense. In a few cases, they use connectives to form complex sentence structures. Many pupils use British Sign Language well.

As a result of the school's well-considered approach to reading, many of the youngest pupils develop a good grasp of initial sounds and an increasingly wide vocabulary. As they move across the school, many pupils make good progress developing skills of inference, fluency and intonation. They are proud to demonstrate their reading skills and show visitors the books they enjoy from authors who have visited the school.

Most pupils across the school have regular opportunities to develop their writing skills appropriately, building on previous learning experiences. Teachers plan lessons systematically, so that pupils build on their knowledge and skills successfully towards a final piece of work. Most of the oldest pupils write at length and use a suitable range of punctuation with increasing accuracy. Many pupils use and apply these skills in a range of contexts across the curriculum. In addition, many older pupils use technology skilfully to support their writing. For example, while writing poetry on the Aberdulais waterwheel, pupils use artificial intelligence (AI) to generate imagery that will stimulate their creative writing.

Many pupils develop their maths and numeracy skills well. Many younger pupils are confident in using mathematical terminology such as 'more than' and 'fewer than' in their activities. In addition, they use nonstandard units to measure beanstalks and also learn to manipulate shapes using a light box. As they move into the older classes, many pupils

understand and use basic fractions, tell the time and compare mass. Many older pupils apply their mathematical understanding to a range of contexts, for example using their knowledge of large numbers to calculate attendance at sports events. However, learning activities do not always sufficiently extend and challenge the few most able mathematicians.

In many cases, teachers use a range of assessment strategies to help pupils understand the next steps in their learning. In the best cases, good written feedback enables pupils to reflect and extend their work. However, the use of effective written feedback is inconsistent, limiting pupils' opportunities to respond and improve their work.

The school's provision to support pupils with ALN, and those who require extra support with their learning is effective. Skilled staff use a range of interventions to ensure that pupils with identified needs make good progress against their personal targets. The school effectively tracks pupils' progress and uses the information to design detailed individual development plans, matched closely to pupils' needs.

Spotlight: The benefit of expressive arts for all pupils

The school's rich, varied and meaningful provision of experiences in the expressive arts gives all pupils imaginative opportunities to develop a broad range of skills and values. Authentic contexts and stimulus from the local community in art and music enable pupils of all backgrounds to develop core values of collaboration, mutual respect, compassion and resilience. The whole-school approach reflects the values and caring ethos of the school.

Staff work diligently to ensure that they develop strong, warm and supportive relationships with pupils. The school's inclusive focus on religion, values and ethics (RVE) promotes a broad range of moral standards that permeate the school. This helps to ensure that behaviour across the school is strong.

Governors work well with the headteacher to manage the school, providing support and challenge when necessary. The school manages its year-on-year income appropriately. However, there is a significant historical deficit and the budget deficit recovery plan, although agreed by the local authority and the governing body, is not realistic in addressing the size of the shortfall within the given time frame.

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. However, there is a significant historical deficit and the budget deficit recovery plan, although agreed by the local authority and the governing body, is not realistic in addressing the size of the shortfall within the given time frame.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carers 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.

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

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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