

A report on

Alway Primary

**Aberthaw Road
Newport
NP19 9QP**

Date of inspection: February 2026

by

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

About Alway Primary

Name of provider	Alway Primary
Local authority	Newport City Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	395
Pupils of statutory school age	298
Number in nursery classes	46
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 21.7%)	49.3%
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 9.2%)	14.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	4.0%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2025

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	23/02/2026

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

The school is a caring and nurturing community with a strong safeguarding culture and positive professional relationships between staff and pupils. Following a period of leadership turbulence, the new headteacher and leadership team work well together to bring a fresh focus and drive. However, currently, the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent. In around half of lessons the pace of learning is too slow.

In general, teachers plan indoor provision for the younger pupils well, through engaging experiences that support early development effectively. Staff build warm relationships, though a few miss opportunities to extend pupils' language and thinking. Activities in the outside areas do not always promote pupils' independence well enough. However, across the school, teaching and learning does not engage or enthuse all pupils. This is because the curriculum does not meet pupils' needs well enough. In around a half of lessons for older pupils, there are clear learning intentions and high expectations. Where practice is weaker, learning lacks clarity and pupils become passive. Pupils engage well where lessons include an element of practical learning, for example in science, dance and PE, and in the woodland area.

Leaders have recently improved the provision for reading, and this has begun to accelerate pupils' progress. However, too few pupils enjoy reading for pleasure. Pupils develop their digital skills suitably across the school. There are limited opportunities for pupils to speak and listen to the Welsh language. Individual development plans are appropriate, both in mainstream classes and in the learning resource bases, but teachers do not always address pupils' identified targets in daily teaching. Teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to ensure that learning challenges pupils of all abilities.

Although leaders are beginning to address key priorities and strengthen accountability, their work to evaluate the improvements is at an early stage. Governors are supportive but overly positive in their evaluations. Despite leaders' work to improve attendance and punctuality, this remains a significant concern, particularly for pupils eligible for free school meals.

Overall, while the school has clear strengths in care, inclusion and safeguarding, leaders rightly recognise the need to improve the quality and consistency of classroom practice, to improve pupils' engagement and progress.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Ensure that teaching across the school consistently meets the needs of all pupils
- R2 Improve attendance
- R3 Develop the curriculum to meet pupils' needs
- R4 Ensure that leaders at all levels evaluate the impact of school improvement activity on how well they have improved pupils' outcomes

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. 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 about 12 months after the publication of this report.

Main evaluation

The school is a caring and nurturing community, with a secure safeguarding culture and emerging leadership capacity. There are strong professional relationships between staff and pupils. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. In around half of lessons, the pace of learning is too slow. In these instances, learning lacks purpose and challenge.

In the younger classes, indoor learning environments are generally well planned and provide varied opportunities for pupils to make choices and develop a variety of early skills. Pupils' earliest experiences help them to get off to a sound start, following activities that interest them while learning routines and developing their social skills. Staff across these classes build warm and caring relationships with pupils and understand the importance of engaging the pupils. Nevertheless, adults occasionally miss opportunities to extend pupils' oracy skills and language development, for example deepening their thinking through purposeful conversation.

In around half of the older classes, teachers communicate clear learning intentions and maintain high expectations. They remind pupils of the key features to include in their work and ensure that pupils understand what is required to be successful. Where teaching is less effective, learning lacks clarity of purpose and adults over-direct activities, which disengages pupils.

In a few lessons, pupils engage well with practical learning activities. Through purposeful discussions, pupils consider each other's ideas, respond well to probing questions and explore cause and effect in real-life contexts. Activities in the woodland learning area provide valuable opportunities to engage with nature while supporting pupils' wellbeing and problem-solving skills.

Early approaches to developing younger pupils' literacy skills are generally successful, helping these pupils to acquire an appropriate range of vocabulary and positive attitudes towards stories and reading. Approaches to reading and writing help to develop older pupils' comprehension skills and their ability to write for a suitable range of purposes. Overall, however, a lack of progressive planning, purposeful learning activities and teachers' low expectations hinder pupils' progress in literacy.

Many pupils make appropriate progress during mathematics lessons. A recent focus on establishing secure knowledge of basic number facts is beginning to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding. There are limited opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical and numeracy skills purposefully.

Teachers plan progressively for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in dedicated lessons. However, across the school, pupils have too few opportunities to practise speaking in Welsh and many are unable to hold simple conversations. Pupils develop their digital skills progressively across the school. By Year 6, many pupils demonstrate a broad range of digital competencies, including coding and 3D modelling.

Across the school and in the learning resource base classes (LRBs), most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) have appropriate individual development plan targets, and reviews are completed within required timescales. However, not all teachers consistently incorporate individual development plan targets into their daily planning and teaching. Staff in the two LRBs work sensitively and build positive relationships with pupils. However, learning activities do not always match these pupils' developmental needs closely enough.

Leaders maintain strong links with healthcare professionals and the local special school, providing useful specialist support. Adults promote inclusion appropriately, and pupils in the older LRB have opportunities to participate in mainstream activities such as collective worship and forest area, which supports a sense of belonging. However, these pupils do not have the opportunity to contribute to wider school leadership activities, such as the pupil voice groups.

Teachers gather and record a range of assessment information. In around a half of lessons though, teachers do not use this well enough to meet the needs of all pupils. Too often, teaching does not provide appropriate challenge for the more able or does not support pupils, including those with ALN, well enough. Pupils value the positive, written feedback they receive from their teachers. However, feedback does not consistently help pupils to understand how to improve their work or move their learning forward.

The school has worked suitably to develop a coherent approach to the humanities area of the curriculum. Despite this, curriculum development work overall has been too slow. The curriculum does not engage or inspire pupils well enough or meet their needs appropriately enough. There are too few opportunities for pupils to influence what and how they learn.

Pupils develop a sound understanding of fairness, equality and different world religions, including how these are represented in Wales. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriate. Teachers plan suitable opportunities for pupils to learn more widely about Welsh language, history and culture.

Most teachers build respectful and supportive relationships with pupils. There are clear processes for supporting any instances of poor behaviour, through a worthwhile restorative approach, although systems for rewarding positive learning behaviours are inconsistent across the school.

The culture of safeguarding is strong across the school, and all staff understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Recent improvements to site security have further enhanced safety. Attendance remains a significant concern. Despite the school's work to address this issue, overall attendance is too low and persistent absenteeism is increasing. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has declined, widening the gap between these pupils and their peers. A few pupils are regularly late for school.

Recent, purposeful senior leadership appointments have brought a clear vision to the school and high expectations of all staff. Together, senior leaders demonstrate a capacity and energy to bring about urgent improvements and provide much needed direction to the school's development work.

Leaders have identified a need to focus on national priorities such as teaching, reading and the Welsh language. They have successfully improved the reading standards for a targeted group of pupils and ensured a coherent whole school approach to teaching phonics.

Professional learning has not consistently addressed the school's most important priorities or been specific enough to meet individual development needs. Leaders have recently strengthened performance management arrangements, for example to include teaching assistants, which supports the emerging culture of accountability well.

There is a comprehensive schedule to monitor and quality assure the school's work, although currently this schedule does not include the work of the LRBs. Over time, evaluations of progress have focused too much on completion of the task, rather than evaluating the impact of an action in improving the outcomes of all groups of pupils, including the more able, those with ALN and those affected by poverty.

Governors provide appropriate support and are beginning to challenge leaders effectively. However, their evaluation of the school's effectiveness is overly positive and does not make explicit the link between classroom practice and pupils' progress. This limits their ability to act as a fully effective critical friend.

Relationships with parents are generally positive and supportive. Recently, leaders have worked to improve regular communication, to help parents have a better understanding of their children's learning.

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 do not manage the school's finances appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer 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:

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