



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

**A report on**

**Alway Primary  
Aberthaw Road  
Newport  
NP19 9QP**

**Date of inspection: November 2016**

**by**

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

## Summary

The pupils at Alway Primary School make strong progress from their starting points and achieve well. They have interesting lessons and receive good quality teaching. However, their attendance is low and there are shortcomings in the support for pupils' wellbeing. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to make choices and decisions for themselves and, as a result, they do not always work well independently. The headteacher promotes a clear vision for the school, and values every pupil as an individual, but aspects of the school's strategic leadership require improvement. As a result, Estyn will review the school's progress in improving these key areas of its work in 12-18 months.

The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' standards in Welsh
- R2 Increase attendance
- R3 Provide regular, purposeful opportunities for pupils to make choices, take on responsibilities and develop their independence
- R4 Address the safeguarding concerns identified during the inspection
- R5 Ensure that leaders' roles are distributed appropriately, and that they focus strategically on improving outcomes for pupils
- R6 Comply with Welsh Government guidance when planning spending of specific grants

## Main findings

### 1: Standards

**Good**

A majority of pupils join the school with speaking and listening skills that are lower than expected for their age. Most make good progress as they move through the school and achieve at or above the expected level by the end of key stage 2.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils make strong progress in developing their literacy skills. By the end of Year 2, many pupils read simple texts aloud and use their phonic knowledge effectively to decipher unfamiliar words. They write simple fiction and non-fiction texts effectively, and use their imagination well, for example to create their own superheroes. By the end of Year 6, most pupils read and write at the level expected for their age. They discuss appropriate texts by their favourite authors, and predict what might happen next. Many pupils write effectively in a range of genres, although a few pupils do not use basic punctuation well to organise their writing. More able pupils use well-chosen vocabulary very effectively to write engaging texts, for example to build up tension in a story related to their topic about the Second World War. Across the school, most pupils use the skills they learn in English to good effect in other subject areas.

In mathematics, most pupils achieve well. In the Foundation Phase, many pupils develop their calculation skills using numbers to a hundred confidently, and use block graphs and pictograms to represent data. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils order decimal numbers confidently. They calculate fractions and percentages, and use a range of graphs and charts to organise data. They identify patterns within sequences of numbers. More able pupils solve problems, and check whether their answers are reasonable and accurate. However, a minority of pupils do not use their numeracy skills to the same level in other subjects as they do in mathematics.

Most pupils develop appropriate skills in information and communication technology (ICT). By the end of the Foundation Phase, they use a wide range of applications on tablet computers to support their learning. In key stage 2, pupils use spreadsheets and databases appropriately. They search for information online competently, and use a range of programmes confidently to present their findings.

Many pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points in developing their basic skills in Welsh. By Year 2, many pupils know their numbers and colours and repeat simple phrases. By Year 6, most pupils respond to simple questions and more able pupils are beginning to form their own questions to ask others. Many read simple texts and their own writing aloud, using correct pronunciation. However, too many pupils are not confident to engage in conversation in Welsh, and their vocabulary is limited to simple words and phrases.

Pupils in the two learning resource classes make good progress from their individual starting points, for example in learning the sounds that letters make and developing their vocabulary and understanding of numbers. Pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes make good progress from their individual starting points.

Although there are some fluctuations between cohorts, generally girls and boys achieve equally well over time. Pupils eligible for free school meals tend to do as well as their peers at the expected levels by the end of key stage 2, although their achievement is a little lower than that of their peers at the end of the Foundation Phase. At the higher-than-expected levels, however, pupils eligible for free school meals do not achieve as well as their classmates.

When compared with similar schools, teachers' assessments of pupils' performance at the expected outcome 5 at the end of the Foundation Phase in literacy and mathematical development have tended to place the school in the upper 50% over the last four years. At the higher outcome 6, pupils' performance in mathematics and in literacy has improved, moving the school from the upper 50% to the top 25%.

Teachers' assessments of pupils' performance at the expected level 4 at the end of key stage 2 has fluctuated, moving the school between the upper 50% and the lower 50% when compared with similar schools. However, at the higher level 5, pupils' performance has improved over the past four years, moving the school from the upper 50% to the top 25%.

<b>2: Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Adequate, needs improvement</b>
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Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure in school and they know whom to go to if they have a problem. They enjoy physical activity and are aware of the need to keep physically fit through exercise and healthy eating. Most pupils have positive attitudes to healthy living and eating.

Most pupils enjoy their learning and are enthusiastic in lessons. For example, during forest schools activities, nearly all pupils are highly motivated and work together well to complete a variety of challenging tasks. They enjoy attending the wide range of activities available to them at lunch times and after school, such as clubs to teach them to knit, make crafts and construct models.

Nearly all pupils are respectful when others are talking, listening carefully to their views. Many concentrate appropriately on their learning and avoid distractions. They stay on task for appropriate lengths of time, and generally try to finish their work. However, many pupils rely heavily on adult support and reassurance, and lack resilience when faced with new challenges. They often find it difficult to engage with new situations or people and, as a result, do not always respond appropriately.

Most pupils work effectively in pairs and in groups, sharing ideas readily. They support each other when they present work and discuss their feelings. For example, Year 2 pupils respond positively when a group performs a poem, give their peers positive feedback and suggest areas for improvement. Year 4 pupils show sensitivity when a fellow pupil explains how she resolved a conflict.

Most pupils usually behave well in assemblies and at lunch times, but a few find it difficult to manage their own behaviour and need support. Most pupils respond well to adults' strategies to manage behaviour. For example, nearly all classes move in an exemplary fashion along very long corridors between activities.

Rates of pupil attendance for the last four years are very low and have placed the school consistently in the bottom 25%, when compared with similar schools. A few pupils are regularly late for school in the mornings.

<b>3: Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Good</b>
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Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Nearly all teachers provide imaginative, exciting activities that engage learners effectively. For example, Year 2 pupils are enthralled when a visiting wizard pulled spells out of his pocket for them to read and perform. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and do their best. As a result, most learning proceeds at a good pace.

Adults manage pupils' behaviour well. They make good use of carefully chosen questions to support pupils' learning and challenge them to think deeply.

Teachers give pupils regular feedback about how well they are doing, for instance by praising thoughtful contributions in class. Their marking is purposeful and efficient. It identifies clearly the next steps that pupils should take, and provides opportunities for pupils to practise any skills that they need to improve. This feedback process makes a strong contribution to pupils' good progress. Pupils mark each others' books on suitable occasions, and this helps them to know how to improve their own work. Teachers assess pupils' work accurately and make good use of their assessments to set targets for pupils to improve.

Teachers plan plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in oracy, reading and writing across the curriculum. However, opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy and ICT skills are less well developed. In the Foundation Phase, teachers make appropriate use of the outdoor areas. All pupils, including those in the learning resource base, enjoy learning outdoors through well-planned activities in the forest school.

Teachers have identified that many pupils need to practise their literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school day so they provide many well-structured sessions to help pupils to learn these basic skills. However, this limits pupils' opportunities to make choices and decisions for themselves. For example, in the Foundation Phase, pupils often complete activities that the teacher has organised and directed, rather than playing imaginatively or following up things that interest them, and older pupils do not usually decide for themselves how to present their work.

The school's curriculum provides a wide range of valuable experiences for pupils that enhance their learning, for example through learning a musical instrument and taking part in sport and dance. Regular Welsh lessons, and lunchtime Welsh clubs help pupils to understand the importance of learning Welsh. Teachers link the topics that pupils study skilfully with the culture and heritage of Wales, for example through visits to Llancaiach Fawr and Caerphilly Castle, and the annual eistedfodd. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities, both after school and at lunch time, is a strength of the school.

<b>4: Care, support and guidance</b>
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<b>Adequate, needs improvement</b>
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The school provides a wide range of programmes to support identified pupils to develop their skills, including speaking, listening and reading. Well-trained practitioners deliver the programmes effectively. Teachers collect information about pupils' strengths and areas for development carefully. They make good use of this information to identify and provide appropriate support for specific groups, including pupils who are more able and those with additional learning needs. However, systems for devising a strategic overview of interventions are not developed well enough. For example, interventions are not always carefully co-ordinated to make sure that all pupils access the full curriculum. As a result, the school does not always identify the best way forward for all pupils.

Staff know their pupils' needs well. For example, they provide valuable support for vulnerable pupils with emotional needs. The learning resource provision provides a nurturing environment that benefits its pupils. There are productive relationships with most parents, particularly the parents of vulnerable children, and the school provides appropriate information about their progress. Recently improved communication methods keep all parents well-informed about the school's life and work.

Pupils have good opportunities to learn about making healthy lifestyle choices. For example, Foundation Phase pupils recently enjoyed preparing and eating a healthy meal with their parents, based on a popular television cookery programme. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to be physically active, including regular after-school sports clubs. The school ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for instance on the internet. Pupils' opportunities to make decisions and take on meaningful responsibilities, for example through the school council, are less well developed.

A few aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures give cause for concern and do not fully meet requirements. Although adults know how to keep children safe and secure, record-keeping systems are not robust enough.

The school is a caring community that nurtures pupils' personal and social skills well. It makes particularly valuable use of the forest school site, where pupils learn about trust, resolving conflicts and teamwork while taking part in outdoor activities. The school promotes respect and tolerance, and celebrates diversity in attractive displays on the school corridors. Through regular school assemblies and their curriculum work, there are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual and ethical understanding. The school provides rich experiences to help pupils develop their imaginations and engage with the creative arts and cultural activities, for example through visiting theatre groups and regular whole-school productions.

<b>5: Leadership and management</b>
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<b>Adequate, needs improvement</b>
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The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body place equality of opportunity for pupils of all backgrounds at the heart of their vision for the school. They are firmly committed to ensuring the best interests of all pupils, and all staff support this aim well. Leaders have a clear understanding of their roles and carry these out with dedication. However, senior leaders do not distribute responsibilities effectively

enough to support the specific needs of the school, or plan strategically enough to address them.

The governing body is highly supportive of the work of the school. The headteacher and senior leaders keep it well informed about developments and the outcomes of teacher assessments and national tests. The governing body has worked diligently to recruit new members and work together with the wider school community. However, governors do not challenge the work of the school robustly and are not sufficiently involved in the planning and evaluation of actions to bring about school improvement.

Teachers and senior leaders meet regularly to discuss school improvement priorities and engage in training to improve provision and raise standards. Performance management procedures for teachers and teaching assistants support school improvement suitably. There are useful opportunities for staff to attend courses, receive in-house training and work with other schools to view and share good practice. For example, work with other teachers in the local cluster of schools has been effective in improving standards in reading.

Senior leaders undertake a range of monitoring activities that help them to evaluate the quality of the school's work. These include lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and monitoring of teachers' planning. As a result, senior leaders have an appropriate picture of how well the school meets the needs of its pupils. However, the link between the outcomes of school self-evaluation and its plans for improvement is not always clear.

In a majority of cases, planned actions in the school's previous development plans have resulted in improved provision and outcomes for pupils. For example, a focus on improving the quality of teachers' feedback to pupils resulted in marking that now informs pupils more clearly of what they need to do to improve their work. The current school development plan outlines a wide range of priorities and actions that broadly address the needs of pupils. A minority of the planned actions for improvement have measurable, data based, success criteria. However, senior leaders and governors do not monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these plans regularly. This means that they do not know whether they have made a difference or not.

Although the school is making good progress against a majority of Welsh Government priorities, including improving pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, progress towards improving pupils' attendance and Welsh is limited.

The school plans its use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant suitably to ensure that pupils of all backgrounds achieve at an appropriate level. However, it does not target the grant specifically enough to meet the needs of pupils eligible for free school meals, and the majority of its actions do not meet Welsh Government spending requirements.

The school uses its central budget appropriately to support improvements in the quality of provision and to raise standards. Senior leaders and governors plan and monitor the school's expenditure appropriately. Spending priorities link well to areas

for improvement identified in the school development plan. For example, the recent purchase of additional laptops has improved provision for the development of pupils' ICT skills.



## About the school

Alway Primary School is situated in the outskirts of Newport, in a designated Communities First area. The site is shared with local authority support services and Flying Start nursery provision. Most pupils come from the immediate area around the school.

Pupil numbers have increased over the last four years. There are currently 393 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11. Pupils are taught in 11 single-age and two mixed-age classes. In addition, there are two mixed-age learning support classes, providing education for up to 20 pupils with a wide range of additional learning needs. There are also two part-time nursery classes.

English is the predominant language for nearly all pupils. A few pupils learn English as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh at home. Approximately 45% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is much higher than the average for Wales. The local authority looks after a few pupils.

The school has identified that around 21% of pupils have additional learning needs. This is lower than the national average of 25%. Around a third of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs. There have been 18 fixed-term exclusions during the past 12 months.

The present headteacher took up his post in September 2003. The school was last inspected in November 2009.

## Appendix 1: Summary table of inspection areas

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

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

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

## Appendix 2: Performance data

### 6802315 - Alway Primary School

Number of pupils on roll	413
Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) - 3 year average	44.8
FSM band	5 (32%<FSM)

#### Foundation Phase

	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Number of pupils in Year 2 cohort</b>	51	46	51	51
<b>Achieving the Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) (%)</b>	84.3	80.4	82.4	84.3
Benchmark quartile	1	2	2	2
<b>Language, literacy and communication skills - English (LCE)</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	51	46	51	51
Achieving outcome 5+ (%)	84.3	82.6	84.3	84.3
Benchmark quartile	2	3	2	3
Achieving outcome 6+ (%)	37.3	30.4	41.2	41.2
Benchmark quartile	1	2	1	1
<b>Language, literacy and communication skills - Welsh (LCW)</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	*	*	*	*
Achieving outcome 5+ (%)	*	*	*	*
Benchmark quartile	*	*	*	*
Achieving outcome 6+ (%)	*	*	*	*
Benchmark quartile	*	*	*	*
<b>Mathematical development (MDT)</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	51	46	51	51
Achieving outcome 5+ (%)	86.3	87.0	82.4	88.2
Benchmark quartile	2	2	3	2
Achieving outcome 6+ (%)	25.5	23.9	37.3	43.1
Benchmark quartile	2	2	1	1
<b>Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity (PSD)</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	51	46	51	51
Achieving outcome 5+ (%)	86.3	93.5	94.1	92.2
Benchmark quartile	3	2	2	3
Achieving outcome 6+ (%)	33.3	41.3	49.0	47.1
Benchmark quartile	2	2	2	2

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) represents the percentage of pupils achieving outcome 5 or above in PSD, LCE/LCW, and MDT in combination.

\* This item may disclose information on individuals, or it is not sufficiently robust for publication, not applicable or is otherwise unavailable.

The benchmark quartile compares the performance of one school against others who have similar levels of pupils with free school meals (FSM). FSM is used as a proxy of social deprivation in schools. This allows a comparison of the performance of a school against others who are in the same FSM category, and who might therefore have a similar intake of pupils from deprived backgrounds.

A school in benchmark quartile 1 is in the highest performing 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals to this school. Therefore, the school's attainment levels are higher than many other schools with similar levels of pupils from deprived backgrounds. A school in benchmark quartile 4 is in the lowest performing 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals to this school. Therefore, the school's attainment levels are lower than many other schools with similar levels of pupils from deprived backgrounds.

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**Key stage 2**

	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Number of pupils in Year 6 cohort</b>	47	40	43	51
<b>Achieving the core subject indicator (CSI) (%)</b>	57.4	80.0	81.4	84.3
Benchmark quartile	4	2	3	3
<b>English</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	47	40	43	51
Achieving level 4+ (%)	66.0	82.5	83.7	86.3
Benchmark quartile	4	3	3	2
Achieving level 5+ (%)	25.5	30.0	30.2	47.1
Benchmark quartile	2	2	3	1
<b>Welsh first language</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	*	*	*	*
Achieving level 4+ (%)	*	*	*	*
Benchmark quartile	*	*	*	*
Achieving level 5+ (%)	*	*	*	*
Benchmark quartile	*	*	*	*
<b>Mathematics</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	47	40	43	51
Achieving level 4+ (%)	63.8	85.0	83.7	88.2
Benchmark quartile	4	2	3	2
Achieving level 5+ (%)	31.9	35.0	39.5	43.1
Benchmark quartile	2	2	1	1
<b>Science</b>				
Number of pupils in cohort	47	40	43	51
Achieving level 4+ (%)	68.1	85.0	83.7	88.2
Benchmark quartile	4	3	3	2
Achieving level 5+ (%)	31.9	35.0	32.6	47.1
Benchmark quartile	2	2	2	1

The core subject indicator (CSI) represents the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination.

\* This item may disclose information on individuals, or it is not sufficiently robust for publication, not applicable or is otherwise unavailable.

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

## 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))

We used this inspection to pilot developments to the common inspection framework, the inspection process and the inspection report format. We will review these arrangements and make any changes required before introducing them nationally in September 2017.

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:

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