



## Report summary for parents and carers on Alaw Primary School

**Date of inspection: March 2023**

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

# Overview

Alaw Primary School is a nurturing, caring school that adopts a strong, inclusive approach successfully. The school provides effective opportunities for pupils to reflect on important values such as equity and diversity. Many pupils feel safe and know who to speak to if they are worried or need help. Most pupils behave well, show respect and empathy towards one another.

Staff are positive role models and provide beneficial support to manage pupils' emotional well-being. The school has developed the learning environment thoughtfully to support pupils to self-regulate their behaviours. This has been particularly helpful for pupils returning to school since the pandemic. Many pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) are supported well and make suitable progress.

Many pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points. Most pupils make good progress in their reading skills. Many younger pupils make suitable progress in their oracy skills. However, older pupils' progress in their writing, numeracy, digital and Welsh skills is not as strong as it should be. Too often, independent learning tasks for older pupils do not focus well enough on pupils' application of skills and knowledge. As a result, there are missed opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding or to develop their skills at the appropriate standard. The use of assessment and feedback varies across the school. In the most effective examples, with younger pupils, support staff question and develop pupils learning. However, for many older pupils, feedback does not always allow pupils to understand what they are doing well and how they can improve their learning. The use of day-to-day assessments to inform next steps planning also varies across the school.

Standards in teaching vary across the school. In the most effective lessons, teachers plan purposeful activities where there is challenge for all pupils. For example, many younger pupils develop their digital skills effectively to create basic animations linked to their literacy work. Overall, younger pupils develop a range of skills and make suitable progress. However, a minority of older pupils do not make sufficient progress in a range of skills across the curriculum. In these classes, teachers do not always build on prior learning to allow pupils to progress sufficiently. Overall, curriculum planning lacks opportunities for pupils to develop a depth of knowledge and to apply their skills at a level to which they are capable.

The school's self-evaluation procedures, arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and to measure the impact of improvement planning are not robust enough. For example, leaders do not use a range of evidence to ensure professional learning has had an impact on standards. As a result, there is often a lack of focus on the important areas for improvement.

Parents and the governing body are supportive of the school and value the information they receive. Governors provide suitable support and ensure the school meets its statutory requirements. There are appropriate policies in place to support safeguarding, healthy eating and lifestyles.

# Recommendations

- R1 Implement effective self-evaluation, improvement planning and monitoring processes to accurately prioritise the main areas for improvement
- R2 Improve teaching, assessment and provision for skills, especially for pupils from Years 3 to 6
- R3 Improve the use of feedback so that pupils know what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve

## What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will work with the local authority to review the school's progress. This is the lightest touch of follow-up, as it is not statutory.



## School context

Name of provider	Alaw Primary School
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Number of pupils on roll	197
Pupils of statutory school age	151
Number in nursery classes	26
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 23.0%)	26.7%
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 16.1%)	8.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	11/11/2014
Start date of inspection	27/03/2023

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