



## Report summary for parents and carers on Idris Davies School

**Date of inspection: May 2023**

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

# Overview

Idris Davies School is a highly inclusive, supportive and caring learning environment where staff know their pupils well. Leaders and staff make a considerable effort to ensure that pupils make progress in their learning and in their personal development during their time at school. This is reflected in the school's vision of giving 'every pupil - every opportunity - every day'.

When they start school in nursery or reception class, many pupils' language and social skills are below the expected levels. Most make good progress from their starting points, particularly in reading, numeracy, personal and social skills. A notable strength is the development of pupils' digital skills and creativity over time.

Leaders are relentless in making sure that the curriculum is accessible to all pupils, placing a particularly strong focus on mitigating the effects of poverty on pupil attainment and progress. As such, the school's curriculum meets the needs of nearly all pupils well and prepares them suitably for the next stage in their learning or for work. Many teachers have suitable expectations of pupils' behaviour and engagement in learning. They plan appropriate activities to ensure pupils make progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. However, there is variation in how well teachers plan for the progressive development of pupils' literacy, in particular writing and advanced reading skills. In a minority of cases, teachers do not monitor pupils' progress in sessions close enough and a few teachers do not provide helpful enough written comments on pupils' work to enable them to understand what and how they can improve.

The support and care for vulnerable pupils, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, is exemplary. Leaders discuss and plan beneficial interventions and activities to help pupils access learning and to thrive in school. Despite their efforts, whole-school attendance remains low since the time of the pandemic and is a concern. There is a strong culture of raising aspirations, promoting ambition and success for all. Leaders work tirelessly to provide further beneficial learning experiences for pupils in collaboration with local employers and businesses.

The headteacher is an enthusiastic and positive-minded leader who places significant importance on raising the attainment and aspirations of all pupils. He shares his vision of providing every pupil with the best opportunities to thrive both academically and socially with parents, pupils and staff successfully. Senior leaders have developed a strong and effective culture of professional learning and this is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and developing leadership at all levels.

# Recommendations

- R1 Improve attendance and reduce the levels of persistent absenteeism
- R2 Strengthen the planning for the progressive development of pupils' literacy, in particular writing and advanced reading skills
- R3 Address the specific areas for improvements in teaching and assessment identified in the report
- R4 Ensure sufficient time for personal and social education in key stage 4

## What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to its work on reducing the impact of poverty on pupils' attainment and raising their aspirations and that of their families, for dissemination on Estyn's website.



## School context

Name of provider	Idris Davies School
Local authority	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	All Age
Number of pupils on roll	897
Pupils of statutory school age	789
Number in nursery classes	36
Number in sixth form	42
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 All age schools is 21.6%)	34.1%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in All age schools is 12.7%)	8.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	3.2%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2018
Start date of inspection	22/05/2023

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