

A report on

Danescourt Primary School

**Danescourt Way
Llandaff
Cardiff
CF5 2SN**

Date of inspection: October 2025

by

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

About Danescourt Primary School

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| Name of provider | Danescourt Primary School |
| Local authority | Cardiff Council |
| Language of the provider | English |
| School category according to Welsh-medium provision | |
| Type of school | Primary |
| Religious character | * |
| Number of pupils on roll | 433 |
| Pupils of statutory school age | 329 |
| Number in nursery classes | 53 |
| 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%) | 11.7% |
| 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 11.1%) | 4.3% |
| Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home | * |
| Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language | 8.2% |
| Lead partner in Initial teacher education | Yes |
| Date of headteacher appointment | September 2022 |

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| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable) | 16/11/2016 |
| Start date of inspection | 20/10/2025 |

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

Danescourt Primary School is a friendly and inclusive community where pupils develop as confident, articulate learners who take pride in their achievements and care for one another. Staff know pupils well and create a calm, supportive environment that helps pupils to feel secure, behave respectfully and enjoy learning.

The headteacher provides compassionate and effective leadership with a clear focus on improvement. Leaders understand the school's strengths and areas for development and plan carefully for continued progress. They place high importance on staff well-being and professional learning, which helps teachers to refine their practice and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Governors know the school well and provide effective support and challenge.

Teachers plan a rich and stimulating curriculum that reflects the diversity of the community and the school's Welsh identity. Learning experiences spark curiosity and creativity and help pupils to think for themselves. This approach supports pupils to develop strong thinking and problem-solving skills from an early age. Teachers set high expectations that encourage pupils to persevere and challenge themselves. They guide pupils to review and improve their work thoughtfully, which helps them to build confidence and independence in their learning.

Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those affected by poverty, make good progress from their individual starting points. They develop effective literacy, numeracy and digital skills and apply these appropriately across their learning.

Most pupils enjoy learning Welsh and take part enthusiastically in lessons, although pupils need more opportunities to develop their oracy skills to make consistent progress.

The school's 'Roots' provision, is housed in a calm and welcoming space for pupils who sometimes find the classroom environment overwhelming. Staff help pupils to rebuild confidence and manage their emotions so they can return to class ready to learn. 'Roots' also provides a base for family and agency work, ensuring effective and well-coordinated support for pupils.

Recommendations

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

R1. Improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Danescourt Primary School is a vibrant, friendly and inclusive school where pupils feel safe and grow as confident, articulate learners who are proud of their own achievements and the community they live in. Leaders and staff share a determined vision for success that inspires pupils to aim high, work hard and care for one another.

The headteacher provides compassionate and purposeful leadership focused on school improvement. Leaders place high importance on staff well-being and create a culture where individuals feel valued, supported and motivated to give their best for pupils. They build productive relationships with parents, partner schools and the local community. These partnerships enhance pupils' learning experiences and deepen their sense of belonging and well-being.

Leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They use robust self-evaluation to identify priorities that enhance pupils' well-being and progress, and leaders at all levels contribute effectively to improvement. Their insightful and agile approach drives improvement and supports progress in national priorities, including additional learning needs (ALN) reform, Curriculum for Wales and Welsh language development. Leaders and governors share a firm commitment to equity. They use the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) effectively to reduce the impact of poverty and strengthen pupils' engagement in learning. Governors know the school well and provide constructive support and appropriate challenge. Leaders and governors work together well to promote a culture of improvement that strengthens teaching and enriches pupils' learning experiences.

Leaders prioritise high-quality professional learning that links directly to the school's improvement priorities. They use a range of approaches, including performance management, to strengthen teaching and improve outcomes for pupils. The school's coaching and mentoring programme gives staff at all stages of their careers valuable support to refine their practice and share effective strategies. This coherent approach improves the overall quality of teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics. As a lead school for Initial Teacher Education (ITE), leaders make an important contribution to developing new teachers who benefit from the school's reflective and supportive professional learning culture.

The school provides a rich and stimulating curriculum that reflects the diversity of its community and its strong connection to Wales and the wider world. Teachers plan interesting and immersive experiences, including visits within and beyond the local area, that spark curiosity and deepen their knowledge and understanding. Most pupils show enthusiasm for learning and behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school.

Across the school, pupils have valuable opportunities to influence school life and their learning. Teachers listen to their views and encourage ownership of their learning. This supports most pupils to develop independence, confidence and leadership skills.

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective. Pupils engage thoughtfully with themes of identity, diversity and inclusion. During these learning experiences they develop empathy, and a secure sense of society and cultural identity. They show genuine respect for others and uphold the school's values.

From a young age pupils develop their thinking and problem-solving skills effectively. Many younger pupils enjoy tackling problems in their play. Most older pupils collaborate successfully as they organise and share ideas to find solutions together.

Spotlight: Embedding a culture of reflection and challenge in learning

Across the school, teachers set ambitious expectations and encourage pupils to challenge themselves and learn with confidence. Staff provide well-planned opportunities for pupils to review and refine their work. Older pupils, for example, make thoughtful changes that strengthen vocabulary and expression in their imaginative writing. This highly effective approach enables most pupils to think deeply about their learning and develop as reflective, independent learners who make strong progress over time.

Most pupils, including those with ALN and those experiencing poverty make good progress from their individual starting points. Most pupils make strong progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. By the time pupils leave the school, most pupils are confident and articulate speakers, who vary their expression and vocabulary according to their audience effectively. The school's positive reading culture nurtures pupils' enjoyment of books, and staff teach a wide range of reading strategies so that nearly all become fluent readers. The school's thoughtful approach to teaching writing enables many pupils to make exceptional progress in developing their writing skills. By Year 6, many pupils use a wide range of mature and imaginative language to capture the readers' interest, convey meaning clearly and evoke emotion. Nearly all pupils apply their writing skills effectively across the curriculum.

Across the school, many teachers model the Welsh language appropriately. They use Welsh naturally during lessons to greet pupils, give simple instructions and model basic sentence patterns for pupils to copy and respond to. This helps most pupils to enjoy learning Welsh and to take part enthusiastically in lessons. However, opportunities to practise and extend Welsh oracy skills are not yet consistent enough to support steady progress across the school.

Most pupils develop their mathematical skills effectively. Teachers plan purposeful activities that help younger pupils explore ideas through play and build a secure early understanding of mathematical concepts. As they move through the school, most apply their mathematical knowledge in lessons and across the curriculum, strengthening their numeracy skills, reasoning and problem-solving in real-life situations. Pupils use digital skills confidently across their learning. They show increasing independence in developing and using research data handling and presentation skills.

The school's provision for pupils with ALN is a strength. The robust approach to identifying individual needs and providing targeted support helps pupils with ALN to make effective progress towards their learning and well-being goals. Skilled support staff apply a range of strategies and purposeful interventions to enhance and develop pupils' well-being, social communication and literacy and numeracy skills.

Staff use the outdoor environment effectively to develop pupils' creativity, curiosity and physical skills. A broad range of extra-curricular clubs enriches pupils' experiences and supports them to explore new interests and build valuable personal and social skills. Leaders monitor attendance closely and work closely with families and external partners to reduce absence and improve overall attendance across the school.

Spotlight: Enhancing well-being through the innovative use of the school's buildings

Leaders make innovative use of the school building and grounds to strengthen pupils' well-being. Staff have created a calm and homely space in an unused school building that provides a safe haven for pupils who sometimes find the classroom environment overwhelming. Partly funded by the PDG, the space known as 'Roots' is used imaginatively to offer targeted activities that help pupils to self-regulate, rebuild confidence and re-engage in learning. It also provides a base for family and external agency work, which further enhances partnership working.

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.

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:

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