

A report on

Inspired Learners

**161 Holton Road
Barry
Vale of Glamorgan
CF63 4HP**

Date of inspection: January 2026

by

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

About Inspired Learners

Name of provider	Inspired Learners
Proprietor status	Inspired Learners Ltd
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent
Residential provision?	No
Number of pupils on roll	8
Pupils of statutory school age	8
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	{PreviousInspectionDate}
Start date of inspection	22/01/2026

School context

Inspired Learners is the proprietor's first independent school. The school is registered for a maximum of 10 pupils between 7 and 16 years of age with social, emotional mental health (SEMH) needs. There are currently 8 pupils on roll and all pupils have individual development plans (IDP).

The school occupies a three-storey building in a commercial area of Barry. The building comprises of three classrooms and adjacent breakout spaces, two kitchens, a therapy room, toilets, offices and a small outdoor play area to the rear of the building.

The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, is supported by a deputy headteacher, a class teacher and three higher level teaching assistants. Collectively they deliver the curriculum and range of interventions including speech, language and communication, music and art.

Previous recommendations

- R1 Consider developing an independent board to provide support and challenge to the work of the school.
- R2 Develop systems and approaches that enable leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision and measure pupils' progress over time.
- R3 Ensure that pupils' short term targets are specific, measurable and written in a way such that pupils can actively engage in planning and evaluating their progress.

Summary

Inspired Learners School provides a highly welcoming and nurturing environment in which pupils feel safe and valued. Nearly all pupils settle quickly on joining the school and, as a result, make very strong progress from their starting points, socially, emotionally and academically.

Staff are highly committed and have an exceptionally strong understanding of pupils' additional learning needs (ALN) and interests. This ensures pupils' learning and well-being are supported effectively.

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that meets pupils' needs well. Nearly all pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills confidently and apply these effectively across the curriculum. Oracy is a notable strength of the school, with nearly all pupils speaking confidently with adults and peers and contributing thoughtfully to discussions.

The school supports pupils very well to develop their emotional, social and independence skills and prepares them well for transitions to post-16 destinations. Targeted interventions, including therapeutic and communication-based approaches alongside bespoke literacy support, help pupils to regulate their emotions and engage positively in learning.

Nearly all pupils behave well, are polite and welcoming to visitors, and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and underpin the school's strong culture of care.

Pupil voice is embedded effectively across the school. Pupils contribute meaningfully to decision-making through the school council and structured reflection activities, which helps to build their confidence and resilience. The school continues to embed strategies to further support pupils develop their emotional resilience.

Leaders monitor pupils' progress carefully through a holistic assessment framework and have effective quality assurance processes in place to evaluate the impact of provision.

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

Main evaluation

Inspired Learners school fosters a highly welcoming, nurturing and inclusive culture in which pupils feel safe and flourish. On joining the school, nearly all pupils rapidly develop a strong sense of belonging and make very strong progress from their starting points socially, emotionally and academically.

Staff are highly dedicated and know pupils' additional learning needs (ALN) and their interests exceptionally well. They foster positive working relationships built on respect and trust, which ensures that pupils feel well supported. As a result, pupils always have someone to speak to if they ever feel anxious or have concerns.

The school curriculum is broad and balanced and meets pupils' needs well. It offers a range of accredited qualifications alongside practical, life-based learning experiences such as cooking, gardening and physical fitness, which supports pupils' engagement and progression successfully.

Teaching staff plan well-structured and engaging lessons. They skilfully use questioning to extend pupils' problem-solving skills and assess pupils' knowledge and understanding continually.

Nearly all pupils develop their creativity skills enthusiastically. In art, pupils study contemporary artists such as Clarice Cliff and Andy Warhol and recreate work in similar styles, developing their confidence and expressive skills well.

Nearly all pupils develop their literacy skills well and apply these confidently across the curriculum. They develop their ability to write extended pieces increasingly well. For example, in science pupils explain how the cardiovascular system works and use descriptive language in English when writing about a tsunami disaster linked to a humanities topic on tectonic plates. Oracy is a notable strength of the school. Nearly all pupils speak confidently with adults and peers, explain their thinking clearly and contribute thoughtfully to discussions, including when exploring topics linked to the United Nations Convention on the Rights Child (UNCRC).

Nearly all pupils also benefit from opportunities to pursue independent learning projects, including themes such as gardening or the Jurassic world. Through this work, pupils apply skills learned in the school's core curriculum to an area of personal interest. As a result, pupils are highly engaged and take pride in the quality of their work.

Nearly all pupils competently apply numeracy skills across the curriculum. They measure ingredients in cookery, learning to budget in independent living lessons and calculate fractions and percentages confidently in mathematics.

The school supports pupils very effectively to develop their emotional, social and independence skills through a range of purposeful learning activities. These experiences prepare pupils well for life after they leave the school and include extended transition visits to further education colleges, participating in work experience, visits to the local leisure centres and cafes where pupils participate in badminton or confidently order food.

The school makes good use of targeted interventions to support pupils' individual needs. These include therapeutic and communication-based approaches, alongside bespoke literacy support, which help pupils to regulate their emotions and engage positively in learning.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They behave well, are polite and welcoming to visitors and show respect to staff and peers.

Leaders have developed a secure and well embedded culture of safeguarding at the school. Robust arrangements are in place to report and monitor safeguarding concerns relating to pupils, and these are well understood by staff. Further, ongoing professional learning relating to safeguarding and mental health ensures that staff are well equipped to support pupils effectively.

Pupil voice is embedded across all aspects of school life, with nearly all pupils engaging in meaningful discussions, debates and decision-making. For example, members of the school council have contributed to improvements in outdoor areas and are now working with an artist to produce a mural. Additionally, structured opportunities such as reflection time empower pupils, enhancing their confidence, decision-making and involvement in the life of the school. The school continues to embed strategies to further strengthen pupils' emotional resilience.

The school is strongly committed to embedding the principles of the UNCRC within its curriculum. This commitment is evident in the whole-school initiative to integrate this across the school and through weekly timetabled sessions that promote discussion of current affairs and their impact.

Leaders have implemented a holistic assessment framework and embedded robust quality assurance processes that enable them to accurately identify trends and patterns in pupil progress, engagement and attendance. Regular monitoring of pupil progress through learning walks, book scrutiny, pupil voice activities and pupils' personal learning goals enables leaders to evaluate the impact of teaching and interventions effectively.

Leaders are highly visible and place the well-being of pupils and staff at the core of all they do. They are valued by staff who appreciate the supportive culture and opportunities for professional learning that they have created.

Since the last visit, leaders have worked diligently and the school has made strong progress against the recommended areas for action. They have embedded strong systems and approaches that enable them to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision and measure pupils' progress over time. The development of pupil learning goals supports pupils to actively engage in planning for and evaluating their own progress. In addition, a newly formed advisory body provides the headteacher with valuable support, challenge and accountability for decision making.

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

The provision of information

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this standard.

New recommendations

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

R1 Continue to embed and evaluate strategies that support pupils' resilience

Safeguarding

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

What happens next

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what actions the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents/carers at the school.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and support staff 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/proprietor(s), leaders and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work 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 lessons and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning
- 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 had 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 (where appropriate), 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 (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>)

The report was produced in accordance with section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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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