



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

**A report on**

**Montgomery C.I.W. School  
Montgomery  
Powys  
SY15 6QA**

**Date of inspection: February 2019**

**by**

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

## About Montgomery C.I.W. School

Montgomery Church in Wales Primary School is in Montgomery in the Powys local authority. There are around 103 pupils on roll, aged from 4 to 11. There are four mixed-age classes in the school.

The rolling average for the past three years shows that about 4% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is well below the national average of 19%. Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnicity. No pupils speak Welsh at home, and a few have English as an additional language. The school identifies around 10% of pupils with additional learning needs. This is much lower than the national average of 21%.

The headteacher took up her position in September 2017. The school's last inspection was in May 2012.

Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when it is a school with a religious character. Instead, the governing body is required by law to arrange for religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.

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

## Summary

Nearly all pupils are happy and enjoy belonging to the school. They feel safe and well cared for. There are many pupil leadership groups, such as the school council and digital leaders, which make a notable contribution to the life and work of the school. Generally, pupils' behaviour is very good, and most pupils work hard and make strong progress while at the school. Staff co-operate effectively to provide pupils with interesting lessons that engage pupils' interest and encourage them to develop their skills well in numeracy and especially in literacy. Teachers know their pupils well and track their progress carefully. They support pupils with additional learning needs effectively so that they make good progress towards their targets. The headteacher provides effective leadership and provides an ambitious vision and clear strategic direction for the school that focuses strongly on delivering the best outcomes for pupils.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Enable pupils in key stage 2 to make purposeful decisions within lessons in order to develop into resilient, independent learners
- R2 Develop pupils' speaking and listening skills in Welsh in key stage 2
- R3 Further develop shared leadership responsibilities across the school

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

Most pupils make good progress and achieve well as they move through the school. By the end of key stage 2, many have high skill levels, particularly in English.

Throughout the school, nearly all pupils develop well as active listeners. They pay attention to their teachers and listen carefully to the opinions of others. Most pupils develop their speaking skills well. They acquire a rich vocabulary and express their ideas clearly. Many older pupils in key stage 2 are articulate, explain their ideas maturely and use correct terminology. For example, they consider the effects of natural disasters and argue convincingly about which have the most impact on survivors.

Most pupils in the foundation phase make strong progress in learning to read. They develop their knowledge of sounds and letters well. More able pupils read fluently and with good expression. Many pupils use a suitably wide range of strategies to read unknown words, including sounding out and using picture and contextual cues. Most pupils in key stage 2 develop well as independent readers. Most read regularly and experience a wide variety of genres. In upper key stage 2, many read aloud fluently and expressively, adding colour to their reading by voicing different characters. They have a secure understanding of their texts and are beginning to use inference to read between the lines. Most identify the features of non-fiction books correctly and describe how they can find specific information.

Most foundation phase pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds to spell straightforward words. Many form letters correctly. For example, they write simple sentences about how to build rockets and recount their visit to Powis Castle. Many pupils in key stage 2 write effectively in many contexts and for many purposes. Their reports are well-sequenced and informative, and their imaginative writing shows flair, using figurative language effectively. For example, a Year 4 pupil writes 'As she shut the door loudly, she ran into a whole new world which was anything but ordinary'. Pupils in Year 6 use evocative vocabulary effectively in their stories and poems.

Across the school, most pupils make strong progress in developing their skills in many aspects of mathematics. Most have quick recall of mathematical facts and many have strategies that will help them to solve questions. Many pupils in key stage 2 speak knowledgeably about their mathematical thinking and the methods they use to solve a problem. For example, they use inverse operations to check their answers. Nearly all pupils apply a wide range of numeracy skills successfully in a range of subjects across the curriculum. For example, in Year 1 and Year 2, pupils taste freeze-dried space foods to discover the class's favourite. In the school's enterprise week, older pupils calculate the profits generated from manufacturing soft toys.

In the foundation phase, many pupils use ICT competently to navigate robots around a course and to capture images of their work. They create animated images to illustrate their stories about astronauts. As pupils move through key stage 2, they use a range of software for increasingly sophisticated purposes. They use word

processing tools to write play scripts based on 'War Horse' and contribute to the 'Monty Monthly' newsletter. They prepare multimedia presentations, including some about their rock and roll heroes. They present facts about planets in spreadsheets, but do not use their capability to model different scenarios enough.

Many foundation phase pupils make good progress in acquiring a vocabulary of Welsh phrases. They sing Welsh songs, count during lessons and play games, for example 'Beth yw'r amser, Mr Blaidd?'. They respond to instructions and reply appropriately to basic questions. Many pupils in key stage 2 continue to make good progress in Welsh. In lower key stage 2, they describe human features and clothing when playing a 'Guess Who?' game. Older pupils read simple books without hesitation and with understanding. They write extended book reviews and amusing dialogues. Many key stage 2 pupils hold simple conversations. However, most pupils lack the confidence or fluency to go beyond the simple responses that they practise in their Welsh lessons.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and know where to turn if they are worried or upset. They have positive attitudes to learning and work hard. Many have high aspirations for the future. They enjoy lessons and feel that the level of challenge in their work is generally appropriate. Most show a strong degree of concentration and perseverance when faced with challenges, such as when solving tricky problems. Many pupils benefit from the school's anti-bullying programme and its arrangements for supporting pupils' social skills. As a result, most pupils' self-esteem and confidence are high.

Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They co-operate well with others at work and play. They know the school rules and explain why they are important in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all pupils. A group of older pupils undertake an annual survey of the school's achievements in promoting pupils' wellbeing and makes useful suggestions as to what more the school can do.

Most pupils have a strong awareness of how to stay safe on the internet. For example, they explain the importance of not sharing personal information.

Across the school, many pupils contribute to decisions about the school's life and the pupil voice is strong. Many pupils are also beginning to influence decisions about the termly topics that match their interests. However, few pupils in key stage 2 make purposeful choices about what and how they learn within lessons.

Many older pupils take on additional responsibilities enthusiastically. For instance, the school council, digital leaders and Criw Cymraeg take turns to present to the school during assemblies. Consequently, nearly all pupils know the Welsh phrase of the fortnight and how to stay safe on-line.

Key stage 2 pupils undertake training to support and mentor younger pupils effectively in a variety of day-to-day activities, such as play, swimming, reading and science demonstrations. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and understand the importance of helping and supporting others in their community.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating a well-balanced diet and taking regular exercise. The majority of pupils show positive attitudes to exercise when attending after-school sports clubs, such as netball, and when undertaking the 'Monty Mile' around the school grounds.

Nearly all pupils are punctual, and rates of attendance are consistently high.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

Across the school, teachers and support staff maintain positive professional relationships with pupils. Most staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and provide a productive atmosphere for learning and teaching.

Most staff create a positive culture for learning, which fosters pupils' resilience. Nearly all pupils use effective strategies to help themselves when they find work difficult and they understand that, if they persevere, they are more likely to succeed.

In many classes, teachers deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. They use an effective range of teaching approaches to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. They plan well for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and take careful account of the national frameworks. The school is developing its provision to meet the digital competence framework appropriately. However, teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to develop their modelling skills and to use their ICT skills in different subjects.

Many teachers plan and deliver imaginative activities that stimulate and engage pupils fully in their learning. Throughout the foundation phase, teachers ensure a beneficial balance of teacher-led and child-led, independent learning activities in line with the principles of the foundation phase. In key stage 2, pupils become immersed in their topic work about the First World War through visiting trenches that staff set up in the school grounds.

There is a consistent approach throughout the school to planning lessons so that learning objectives and success criteria are clear. This means that pupils know what teachers expect of them and they respond well to the level of challenge that teachers set in classes. Most teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to assess the quality of their own work and that of other pupils using clear criteria. Teachers give helpful verbal and written feedback to pupils. As a result, many understand what they need to do to improve their work.

In most classes, teachers take appropriate account of pupils' interests at the start of topics. In the foundation phase, they provide regular opportunities for pupils to make choices about what and how they learn, which motivates them to succeed and helps them to develop their independent learning skills well. In key stage 2, pupils help to decide the topics they will study, but they have fewer opportunities to make decisions about how to approach their work in lessons. However, teachers are beginning to respond well to new curriculum initiatives to improve aspects of learning and teaching. They have introduced 'Genius Time', which is an open-ended homework project that allows pupils to choose the focus of their study and how they wish to present their learning.

The school provides a wide range of learning experiences and themed weeks that develop pupils' skills in a variety of areas effectively. For example, during British Science Week and International Women's Day, pupils work with female engineers and scientists to explore structures, porosity and underground water sources.

Teachers plan activities that make purposeful use of the outdoor provision. For example, nearly all pupils throughout the school develop their practical skills successfully using the school allotment to grow their own produce.

Across the school, there are regular opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills. For example, teachers have introduced 'Bore Cymraeg', where all classes practise their Welsh language skills through a variety of activities, including games and creative activities such as role play and song. However, the provision in key stage 2 does not always develop pupils' confidence in using their Welsh oral skills enough. The school ensures that pupils have good opportunities to participate in a range of activities that promote Welsh history and culture. For example, the school celebrates St David's Day through its annual Welsh Dathliad, and studies the local area's rich cultural heritage.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school is a happy and caring community where staff support pupils well. They create a nurturing ethos that results in nearly all pupils feeling that staff treat them fairly and with respect. The school promotes pupils' social and moral development well. There is a clear emphasis on promoting the agreed school values in all classes. The school prioritises the social and emotional needs of pupils well. Staff implement beneficial strategies that build pupils' self-esteem and social understanding effectively. The school provides purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about keeping safe. The personal and social education programme includes valuable sessions about anti-bullying, substance misuse, sex and relationships, and online safety. The school makes effective arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

There are appropriate systems for tracking and monitoring the progress of pupils as they move through the school. Leaders use assessment information well to monitor the progress of specific groups of pupils, such as those with additional learning needs and the relative performance of boys and girls.

Staff support pupils with additional learning needs effectively through targeted intervention groups that address literacy skills. These have helped pupils to make better progress and to narrow the gap to other learners. All pupils with additional learning needs have an education plan that includes measurable and challenging targets. Individual plans inform parents how they can support their child's progress and staff review these plans with parents at regular intervals. The school works purposefully with a range of outside agencies to support the varied needs of pupils in their care.

There are productive relationships with parents and there are regular opportunities for parents to learn how to support their children effectively at home. These include workshops on internet safety, mathematics and early reading. Parents attend performances, productions and church celebrations, all of which further promote a



sense of community and shared purpose. The school uses weekly newsletters, social media and its website to keep parents well informed about day-to-day activities, and class teachers provide further information about topics and curriculum content that they plan to cover each term.

Regular parent consultations and detailed annual reports on each pupil's progress keep parents well informed about their children's progress. These reports contain pupils' own comments, which encourages them to reflect appropriately on their achievements.

There are valuable opportunities for the pupils to learn about and to understand issues relating to equality and diversity, such as a wheelchair basketball workshop, multicultural days and weekly inputs that promote the UN Rights of the Child.

The school listens very well to the views of pupils and encourages them to take on leadership roles. Through the work of the pupil voice groups, there are many opportunities for them to take an active part in decision-making, which has a positive impact on the life and work of the school.

Staff encourage pupils to use their imagination and to engage with the creative arts well. Projects such as 'Opera Week' promote pupils' cultural development well and provide an authentic context for pupils to work as a team, composing and performing a production based on the legend of Dinas Emrys.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The headteacher sets high professional expectations for herself and all staff and she has established a clear strategic direction for the work of the school. She works successfully with staff and governors to share an agreed vision for further improvement. As a result, there is a thorough process for evaluating the school's effectiveness and identifying the key improvements needed. School self-evaluation draws well on first-hand evidence contributed by a number of stakeholders. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching, scrutinise pupils' work and assess the school's progress towards its attainment targets at the end of the foundation phase and key stage 2. This gives leaders and managers a sound understanding of the effectiveness of teachers' practice and helps them to identify quickly whether changes they have made in the classroom are having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

The school has an enthusiastic team of teachers and teaching assistants who support each other well. The headteacher deploys staff and allocates responsibilities astutely to make the best use of their skills, qualifications and expertise.

The headteacher works successfully with staff to increase their effectiveness. Staff meetings link appropriately to key priorities within the school development plan. The school has established productive links with other schools and educational networks. Staff use these informative meetings and varied training opportunities to enhance their teaching and leadership skills successfully. For example, links with a pioneer school have enabled staff to provide a more enriched curriculum.

The headteacher has reorganised leadership responsibilities and all members of staff are clear about their roles. Staff are increasingly effective in leading their different areas of learning. For example, the productive partnerships between leaders and their linked governors have improved the teaching of writing and the support for pupils with additional needs. However, the school's self-evaluation appropriately highlights the need to develop these leadership roles and responsibilities further, for example by involving all leaders in lesson observations.

Governors are knowledgeable and supportive and they play an increasingly active role in the day-to-day life of the school. The headteacher keeps them well informed about the school's work. As a result, they understand the performance and progress of pupils well and offer realistic challenges for school improvement.

The headteacher and members of the governing body monitor the budget very carefully and have clear plans to reduce the school's reserves to a more appropriate level. They review the impact of programmes and activities on pupil outcomes regularly to ensure that they are cost effective. For example, the school makes good use of its small pupil development grant to promote the wellbeing of vulnerable pupils successfully.

The school has a clear focus on meeting national priorities. Teachers plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects successfully. The school is preparing well for the digital competence framework. The school has a successful focus on developing pupils' understanding of Welsh heritage and culture, but the provision in key stage 2 does not extend pupils' oral skills as much as it could.

The school has enhanced its indoor and outdoor environment well in recent years, for example by providing more outdoor classrooms for the youngest pupils. The purposeful environment promotes learning and good behaviour successfully.

## 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))

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

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

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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