

A report on
Usk CIW Primary School

**Old School Building
Monmouth Road
Usk
Usk
NP15 1SE**

Date of inspection: October 2025

by

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

About Usk CIW Primary School

Name of provider	Usk CIW Primary School
Local authority	Monmouthshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Estyn does not inspect denominational 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 denominational religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately
Number of pupils on roll	261
Pupils of statutory school age	218
Number in nursery classes	No nursery provision
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%)	8.0%
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%)	17.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	2.3%

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Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	Yes
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2025
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/04/2018
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

The acting headteacher has established a clear and ambitious vision that sets high expectations for pupils' learning, behaviour and well-being. This approach has fostered a strong sense of teamwork, respect and belonging across the community. Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and feel valued and supported. As a result, most make strong progress in nearly all aspects of their learning, including those with additional learning needs.

Pupils develop their literacy skills successfully. They make strong progress in reading, and older pupils show a mature understanding of texts. Most pupils write effectively for a range of purposes, showing growing independence as they edit and improve their work. However, pupils' spelling occasionally lacks accuracy. Pupils' confidence in Welsh is developing well, with younger pupils responding enthusiastically to simple questions. Older pupils express their opinions in Welsh with increasing detail. In mathematics, most pupils make strong progress, applying their understanding successfully in real-life contexts. Across the school, pupils use digital technology responsibly and creatively to enhance their learning.

Teaching is purposeful and engaging. Lessons are well paced, and teachers use skilful questioning to extend pupils' thinking. Staff make effective use of assessment processes and information to support pupils' progress. They support pupils to evaluate their own progress successfully, and as a result, most older pupils take increasing ownership of their own learning.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and imaginative. Opportunities for creative, expressive and outdoor learning enhance pupils' enjoyment and develop their confidence and independence. Pupils play an active role in shaping school life through the school parliament, and they take pride in their responsibilities and achievements.

Governors and staff work effectively together to sustain improvement. Leaders' clear focus on developing professional skills and leadership capacity is beginning to enhance school improvement processes. Effective management of resources ensures that funding supports pupils' needs and enriches their experiences. The school's inclusive ethos, commitment to equality and partnership with parents and the wider community underpin its success.

Recommendations

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

- R1. Continue the work to make pupils' progress in spelling as strong and consistent as their progress in other literacy skills
- R2. Continue to develop leadership capacity at the school

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

The acting headteacher has established and implemented a clear and ambitious vision for the school's work successfully. This vision is based on high expectations for pupils' behaviour, learning and well-being. The effective leadership promotes teamwork, fairness and mutual respect, which underpin positive relationships across the school community. Most pupils enjoy school, they feel valued and supported, and develop a strong sense of belonging. Across the school, nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) make strong progress in nearly all aspects of their learning.

Nearly all pupils develop and use a wide range of vocabulary confidently, both in discussion and in their written work. The school's consistent approach to reading ensures that nearly all pupils make sustained progress. Older pupils demonstrate an increasingly sophisticated understanding of texts, summarising key ideas precisely and making perceptive connections with their own experiences. Nearly all pupils develop their writing skills effectively. Most older pupils recognise the features of different text types and use this knowledge to write effectively for different purposes in all areas of learning. As they progress through the school, most pupils write with maturity and independence, editing their work to improve quality. However, progress in spelling is not as consistent as other aspects of literacy.

Teachers plan purposeful and stimulating Welsh learning experiences that enable pupils to develop their confidence and enjoyment in using the language. Younger pupils respond enthusiastically when introducing themselves and talking about their likes and interests. Many older pupils extend their responses effectively, to provide reasons and opinions.

In mathematics, most pupils make strong progress. Teachers plan progressive activities that consolidate understanding well. Most younger pupils count and order numbers accurately, using mathematical vocabulary confidently when exploring number during taught sessions and when learning through play. Many older pupils apply formulae competently and explain their understanding of mathematical concepts well when solving number problems. Teachers plan beneficial opportunities for pupils to consolidate their understanding of mathematics in authentic real-life contexts.

Pupils use a range of digital tools independently and responsibly to support their learning across the curriculum. Younger pupils record and upload their work to personal folders independently. Older pupils apply their skills creatively when using their coding skills to design games and presentations.

Nearly all lessons are well paced, ensuring that pupils remain focused and motivated throughout. Most pupils demonstrate confidence, perseverance and collaboration in their

learning and show positive attitudes and resilience when faced with challenges. Teachers use a variety of engaging strategies and skilful questioning to deepen understanding and encourage reflection. Explanations are clear and well structured, with teachers adapting their approaches to meet the needs of different pupils. This reflective approach to teaching provides a strong foundation for effective assessment.

Spotlight: Robust assessment systems promote a clear and shared understanding of pupil progress

The school has robust assessment processes and a well-established tracking system to monitor pupils' progress in learning and well-being. Staff use this information in pupil progress meetings to identify where extra support or challenge is needed. Leaders and staff have a shared understanding of expectations for pupils' progress. They apply this consistently to ensure that pupils understand their achievements and next steps. This process helps pupils to take ownership of their learning and progress.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and purposeful, it offers authentic and creative experiences. Opportunities for expressive arts and outdoor learning enrich pupils' experiences meaningfully. As a result, pupils' creative, physical and expressive skills develop successfully. The school promotes equality, diversity and inclusion highly effectively. Pupils develop a secure understanding of fairness and difference and are well prepared to play their part as responsible, respectful members of a diverse society.

Pupils have valuable opportunities to develop leadership skills and influence school improvement. Many take on meaningful responsibilities through the school parliament, where they plan actions, monitor progress and evaluate outcomes. They take pride in their contributions, for example, in their work to promote physical activity and awareness of pupils' rights.

Leaders plan effectively to address priorities successfully. Recent work to improve provision for ALN is effective, systems for identifying and meeting pupils' needs are well established and inclusive. Individual plans are reviewed regularly and take account of views of pupils and parents. Staff work effectively with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they need to make progress and thrive. The school's transition arrangements are well organised and thoughtfully managed, ensuring that all pupils, including those with ALN move smoothly between different stages of their education.

The school has a clear focus on building leadership capacity. Governors and senior leaders have ensured a smooth transition in leadership roles through thoughtful distribution of responsibilities and targeted professional learning. Staff are well supported in their roles and show strong ownership of their areas of responsibility. The introduction of cross-

phase leadership groups has strengthened collaboration and professional dialogue across areas of learning and experience. This work is beginning to enhance school improvement processes.

Senior leaders focus monitoring activities sharply on school improvement priorities. They analyse this work well to identify strengths and inform next steps. This evaluative approach has led to purposeful improvements, such as addressing inconsistencies in pupils' spelling through targeted resources, which are beginning to have a positive impact.

Performance management processes are robust and developmental. Staff have clear and appropriate targets linked to school improvement priorities and individual professional growth. Professional learning is well aligned with the school's priorities, contributing to a coherent, whole-school approach to improvement. Staff make good use of professional learning and collaboration with other schools to enhance practice.

Spotlight: Highly effective practice in promoting independent and reflective learners

Recent opportunities to observe effective practice in developing pupil independence have had a positive impact on pedagogy and learning environments. Classrooms and outdoor areas are stimulating and well resourced, providing purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop independence and creativity. Nearly all staff use a broad range of effective strategies to engage, support, and challenge pupils to take responsibility for their learning. This supports pupils to become confident, self-motivated learners who assess and reflect on their work maturely to set accurate targets for improvement.

Governors are well informed, supportive and proactive. They engage regularly with leaders and have a strong understanding of progress against priorities and their statutory safeguarding responsibilities. Senior leaders and governors manage school finances strategically. They ensure that funding, including the pupil development grant, is used effectively to support pupils with social and emotional needs. The school is successful in securing additional grants to enhance learning experiences and provision.

The school places a strong emphasis on encouraging regular attendance. Its proactive monitoring procedures and the celebration of improvement through awards and pupil ambassador initiatives have a positive impact on attendance rates, with most pupils attending regularly.

The school has positive relationships with parents and the wider community, fostering a strong sense of partnership and shared purpose. Staff regularly invite parents to school events to celebrate pupils' achievements and strengthen home-school links.

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.

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