

Mountain Ash Comprehensive School
New Road
Mountain Ash
RCT
CF45 4DG

10/02/2026

Dear leaders and staff

Interim visit: January 2026

Thank you for your support with the arrangements for the interim visit to the school. We valued the opportunity to meet with you, your staff and pupils to discuss the improvement work the school has carried out since the core inspection.

During the visit we had the opportunity to:

- Meet with pupils and hear their feedback about the school.
- Visit a sample of lessons across the curriculum to see pupils and staff undertaking their work.
- Undertake lesson observations and work scrutiny activities alongside senior and middle leaders.
- Speak with senior leader and middle leaders about your improvement work and how you have worked to address the recommendations from the core inspection.

Focus of visit

Improve the progress that all pupils make in the development of their literacy skills.

It was helpful to hear about how the school has recently aimed to strengthen its approaches to developing pupils' literacy skills. This has included the development of strategies to support pupils' writing and their opportunities to read. The school's approach to reading has mainly focused on providing pupils with vocabulary lists and encouraging pupils to read aloud in different subjects. Leaders are beginning to provide

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staff with suitable training for literacy and offer opportunities to share practice to support teachers' planning. It was also useful to hear how leaders monitor pupils on intervention to support their reading.

We would agree with the school that there needs to be more consistency in how subjects across the curriculum support the progressive development of pupils' oracy, advanced reading skills and writing.

It may be helpful for the school to consider:

- How can teachers support pupils to develop the quality and depth of their oracy skills?
- Are there sufficient, useful opportunities for pupils to develop their advanced reading skills across the curriculum?
- How will teachers further improve the progressive development of pupils' writing skills across the curriculum?
- How will leaders evaluate the impact of specific literacy strategies on pupils' standards and progress in lessons and over time?

Improve the quality and impact of self-evaluation and improvement planning

During the visit, it was useful to discuss the steps the school has taken to focus on strengthening its approach to self-evaluation. It was interesting to note the changes made by senior leaders to the school's self-evaluation cycle and processes. It was helpful to hear how leaders now use a wider range of first-hand evidence to inform their evaluations. It was also useful to hear how all leaders are now more engaged with these processes than at the time of the core inspection. Middle leaders informed us they value the collaborative approach and modelling by senior leaders.

We agree with the school's view that its self-evaluation processes would benefit from focussing more closely on findings from first-hand evidence and the progress all pupils make over time. In addition, we noted leaders do not always evaluate the impact of teaching on learning. We agree that these points would further support leaders to focus precisely on actions required to secure improvements.

It may be helpful for the school to consider:

- How can you ensure self-evaluation processes focus more closely on findings from first-hand evidence?
- How can you ensure leaders evaluate the progress of younger pupils as well as older pupils' progress in their examination courses?
- How can you further support leaders at all levels to consistently evaluate teaching by considering its impact on learning?
- How will you continue to support leaders to plan more precisely for improvement?

The team valued the welcome and the professional dialogue with the school during their visit. Thank you again for your help to plan and arrange this visit.

The school's latest core inspection report and further information on the process and purpose of interim visits can be found on our website:

<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6744053>

Yours sincerely



Lowri Jones

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