

A report on

Montgomery C.I.W. School

**Montgomery
Powys
SY15 6QA**

Date of inspection: February 2026

by

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

About Montgomery C.I.W. School

Name of provider	Montgomery C.I.W. School
Local authority	Powys County Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	English medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Church in Wales
Number of pupils on roll	115
Pupils of statutory school age	102
Number in nursery classes	0
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 21.7%)	9.0%
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 9.2%)	7.7%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	4.6%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	1%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2022

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	19/02/2019
Start date of inspection	23/02/2026

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 headteacher provides strong, compassionate leadership that fosters an inclusive ethos where pupils, staff and families feel a deep sense of belonging. Staff know pupils well and prioritise their well-being, helping to create warm, respectful relationships across the school. Governors engage actively in monitoring and have a secure understanding of the school's strengths.

The school has a systematic approach to teaching reading. This helps most pupils to develop as enthusiastic, fluent readers by the time they leave school. However, the approach to teaching writing is less consistent, and this limits how well pupils build their skills over time. Pupils' digital competence is a strength, with nearly all older pupils applying their skills confidently across the curriculum. The recently introduced mathematics scheme is beginning to improve progression and consistency in the quality of teaching and learning. This ensures that many pupils develop secure early mathematical skills. However, they do not build on these skills consistently well over time. While many teachers plan engaging learning activities and use questioning well to encourage pupils to explain their thinking, they do not provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to use and apply these skills.

Pupils benefit from a rich and authentic range of learning experiences that promote strong creative skills and deepen their understanding of Welsh culture. Work with local and Welsh artists, alongside the prominent celebration of pupils' achievements, fosters a strong sense of pride and belonging. The school promotes Welsh consistently well. Purposeful opportunities led by a confident pupil voice group ensure that, by the end of year six, most pupils develop secure and confident Welsh oracy skills.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is a strength. Skilled staff provide tailored support that helps pupils to overcome barriers to learning.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Strengthen self-evaluation and school improvement processes to focus more precisely on the quality of teaching and its impact on learning
- R2 Ensure that teaching provides appropriate challenge and enables pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R3 Ensure that provision supports the progressive development of pupils' skills in mathematics and writing

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

There is a strong sense of identity at Montgomery Church in Wales Primary where pupils and adults alike show great pride in their school. The headteacher leads by example and has established a strong culture of belonging across the school community and beyond. Pupils, staff, governors and families share a common vision. Staff treat pupils with respect and sensitivity, and this leads to positive and trusting relationships across the school.

The school is inclusive and caring with appropriate spiritual and moral support. Staff know pupils well and provide high levels of care and guidance. In addition, pupils value the support they receive from their peers. The curriculum provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to consider moral values and to explore their own identity. Through this, they gain an appropriate understanding of issues such as diversity.

Staff provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities to develop their oracy skills through paired and group work. This supports many pupils to speak confidently and articulately. Teachers use a systematic approach for teaching reading that ensures most pupils make good progress over time. They provide access to a wide range of interesting reading materials, which fosters pupils' enjoyment in reading. Most older pupils read with fluency, confidence, and enthusiasm. Planning for the progression of pupils' writing is not sequenced consistently well across the school. Pupils have too few opportunities to edit and redraft their work, which limits the development of their writing skills. In general, staff do not always set high enough expectations for presentation. As a result, the quality of pupils' written work varies, and does not always reflect what pupils can achieve.

Spotlight 1: Promoting the Welsh language

The school promotes Welsh consistently well through regular opportunities for pupils to use the Welsh language in authentic contexts, including singing Welsh songs. Weekly assemblies, led by a confident pupil voice group, provide valuable opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their Welsh oracy skills. By the time they leave school, most older pupils develop secure spoken Welsh. They respond accurately to more complex questions and demonstrate confidence and pride in using the language and in their Welsh identity.

Teachers provide purposeful activities for pupils to develop their digital skills from a young age. This begins in the youngest classes where pupils develop their skills appropriately through exploration of a range of tools. As pupils move through the school, they develop their digital competence well and apply their skills confidently through pupil-led projects.

The recently introduced whole-school mathematics scheme is beginning to strengthen provision for mathematics. However, in around half of classes, teachers rely too heavily on

the scheme and do not adapt learning sufficiently to meet pupils' needs. As a result, opportunities to challenge pupils and deepen their understanding are limited. In the youngest classes, effective use of practical resources helps many pupils develop numeracy skills appropriate to their stage of development, such as counting and comparing numbers. From Year 3 to Year 6, most pupils make suitable progress in developing their basic mathematical skills. More able pupils work confidently with number and use strategies such as long multiplication to solve calculations effectively. Although a majority of pupils recall prior learning appropriately, too few deepen their understanding because they have limited opportunities to apply their skills in new contexts.

Spotlight 2: Developing creative skills with a strong Welsh dimension

Pupils benefit from a broad range of authentic, well-planned learning experiences that promote strong creative skills. Many activities draw effectively on the work of local and Welsh artists, enabling pupils to develop a meaningful understanding of their cultural heritage. The prominent celebration of pupils' achievements and purposeful project work across year groups strengthen pupils' sense of belonging. This supports pupils to develop a clear understanding of their local area and the Welsh heritage and culture.

Across the school, the quality of teaching and learning varies. In the strongest practice, teachers use skilful questioning and purposeful feedback to support pupils' learning effectively. They create stimulating and engaging learning environments that promote curiosity, independence and collaboration, enabling pupils to develop positive learning behaviours. Too often, teachers plan activities that do not connect well enough to pupils' prior learning. Planning does not support pupils systematically enough to apply previously taught literacy and numeracy skills. This limits pupils' ability to consolidate and transfer their skills.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is effective. Staff identify pupils' needs at an early stage and provide tailored support that helps them make strong progress from their individual starting points. Skilled teaching assistants support pupils' needs purposefully and sensitively. They work successfully alongside teachers to adapt provision appropriately and help remove barriers to learning. Recently introduced pupil progress meetings are beginning to support leaders appropriately to monitor the progress of pupils with ALN and those impacted by poverty.

Most staff understand their roles and responsibilities well. Middle leaders carry out regular monitoring activities and produce detailed reports for staff and governors. These reports focus too heavily on compliance and do not give sufficient attention to evaluating pupil progress. This means that key areas for development, such as improving consistency in writing, are not identified clearly enough to bring about improvement. While leaders

provide valuable professional learning opportunities that are aligned suitably to priorities, they do not evaluate the impact of this on pupils' outcomes.

The Governing Body works effectively alongside the headteacher to promote a positive culture of safeguarding. They know and support the school well and demonstrate a secure understanding of its key strengths. Governors engage appropriately in the school's self-evaluation processes and undertake a valuable range of monitoring activities, including learning walks and listening to learners. While governors provide strong support for the headteacher in many aspects of school life, they do not use the range of evidence available to them well enough to challenge leaders about the quality of teaching and learning.

The school monitors pupils' attendance robustly, particularly those with free school meals. Staff work effectively with families of identified pupils to improve attendance. This work contributes well to improving pupils' attendance.

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/carer 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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