



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

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
Church Bank
Montgomery
Powys
SY15 6QA**

Date of inspection: May 2012

by

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



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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

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Context

Montgomery Church-in-Wales School is situated in Montgomery in Powys. Nearly all pupils reside locally with a few pupils coming from the surrounding area. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds and the school describes the area as mainly owner-occupied homes. Around 6% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is below local and national averages and is falling.

There are currently 112 pupils on roll, organised into five classes. The school admits pupils to the nursery at the age of three. The classes are taught by five full-time teachers. They are assisted by five full-time and seven part-time learning support staff.

The school has no pupils who are “looked after” by the local authority. Around 23% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs and one pupil has a statement of special educational need. English is the predominant home language of almost all pupils. No pupils were excluded within the last year.

The headteacher was appointed in March 2012. The school had previously had three headteachers and two acting-headteachers in eight years.

The individual school budget per pupil for Montgomery C.I.W. School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,389 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Powys is £14,685 and the minimum is £3,005. Montgomery Church-in-Wales School is 74th out of the 101 primary schools in Powys in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The overall judgement on the school's current performance is good because:

- most pupils make good progress and achieve well;
- from their starting points, pupils make good progress in their Welsh language;
- the school uses the local environment well to engage pupils; and
- pupils have high standards of wellbeing.

Prospects for improvement

The overall judgement on the prospects for improvement is good because:

- leaders and managers now have a clear focus on school improvement;
- the school improvement plan has clear and effective targets;
- governors are well informed and challenge the school effectively; and
- partnerships have a strong impact on pupil performance and wellbeing.

Recommendations

In order to further improve the school should;

- R1 raise standards achieved by more able pupils, especially in writing;
- R2 improve the quality of teaching in the Foundation Phase;
- R3 develop planning to meet fully the needs of more able pupils;
- R4 be more consistent when marking pupils' work so that pupils know what they need to do to improve.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Throughout the school, most pupils have well developed speaking and listening skills. They speak confidently to adults and other children, ask thoughtful questions and use an increasingly wide vocabulary.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils make sound progress with their writing. By the end of Year 2, they write correctly punctuated sentences for a range of purposes. However, very few pupils, especially the more able, write at length or use the breath of vocabulary they use in their oral work.

Older pupils write for a range of purposes including reports, recounts, stories and poems. Although pupils use punctuation well, draft work appropriately and often write with good imagination, their handwriting is not well developed and too many pupils pay insufficient attention to spelling.

Most pupils develop good phonic skills in the early years' classes. By the end of the Foundation Phase most read well and with good fluency. They talk very confidently about books and authors they like and which parts of the story they enjoy. More able pupils can explain what is likely to happen next in the story and give valid reasons for their choice. Almost all know how to use an index.

By the end of key stage 2, almost all older pupils read with good expression and fluency. They confidently read a wide range of books for enjoyment and to find information. Most talk knowledgably about authors or texts they like. Many can skim text well to gain an overall impression of meaning.

Most pupils use their numeracy skills well in other subjects, but older, more able pupils do not analyse or interpret a sufficiently wide range of data well enough in subjects such as science or geography.

Pupils are making good progress in both their written and spoken Welsh. Almost all respond well to the instructional and everyday Welsh used by adults using language patterns they have learned in lessons. Many older pupils are keen speak Welsh to visitors and use an increasing range of more complex vocabulary and responses.

Due to the small number of pupils at the end of both key stages, the results of pupil assessments have to be treated with care. This is because one pupil's results can have a significant impact on overall school performance.

Pupils enter the school with standards that are above those expected for pupils of a similar age. Trends over five years show that by the end of the Foundation Phase most pupils make good progress. This progress continues in key stage 2 and by the time pupils transfer to secondary education they attain well. Generally, results are above of the average for similar schools (schools with a similar percentage of free school meals) and above average for the school's family (schools facing similar

challenges). In 2011, pupil performance in key stage 2 was the highest in the school's family.

Overall, pupils in receipt of free school meals make good progress and achieve as well as other pupils. Many pupils who have additional support with their literacy make at least the expected progress in their reading and spelling. A minority do even better. More able pupils generally achieve appropriately. However, scrutiny of pupils' work identifies shortcomings in their writing and this sometimes hinders their progress.

There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls in end of key stage assessments, although in their work girls use their reading, writing and oracy skills slightly better than boys.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school. They show a clear appreciation of the importance of healthy lifestyles and understand how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils enjoy and value the good range of physical activities available to them.

Almost all pupils behave particularly well. Very little bullying occurs and staff deal with rare incidences promptly.

Most pupils are enthusiastic and attentive learners and are courteous and friendly. Almost all pupils show care, respect and concern for others and increasingly mature attitudes as they move through the school. The care that older pupils show for younger pupils is outstanding.

Many pupils work well independently or in groups and teams. In lessons they begin work quickly, stay on task for long periods and take real interest in what they do. A majority are aware of what they need to improve their work but very few are engaged in contributing to planning what they learn.

The school council works well. It has been successfully involved in refurbishing the pupils' toilets and developing playground equipment. In addition, many pupils take on additional responsibilities well as they move through the school, including road safety and fire officers, school ambassadors and house captains.

Almost all pupils are involved with the community through sporting events and fundraising activities, services at St. Nicholas' Church, or digging allotments for the elderly.

Pupils' attendance is improving. It is currently around 94%, and in the upper 50% of that for similar schools. Most pupils are punctual.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which effectively challenges many pupils. Long term planning provides good support for staff. Most staff plan

stimulating learning experiences and make very good use of the local environment to enhance the curriculum. Interesting visits to local museums and castles, for example in Montgomery and Chirk, help pupils to develop a very good understanding of their local area. In addition, out-of-school learning activities support the curriculum well. However, the school does not meet Welsh Government recommendations for teaching time in key stage 2.

Provision for developing skills in literacy and information and communication technology is generally good. The weekly 'shared reading' sessions are having a strong impact on raising the standards of reading and wellbeing for almost all pupils. There are minor shortcomings in the provision for more able pupils to develop their writing and numeracy skills.

The school has effective programmes in place to help pupils who need extra support with their learning. Older pupils benefit from 'writing squad' time. Provision for the Welsh language is effective. Many staff regularly use Welsh in lessons. Support staff, including the school cook, promote the Welsh language well and encourage the pupils to respond. Pupils have many good opportunities to study the history and culture of Wales through lessons, trips, visits and cultural activities.

The school's provision for sustainability is good. Pupils are developing a sound awareness of other cultures and societies.

Teaching: Adequate

Teaching in key stage 2 is good. Staff expect pupils to achieve highly and challenge them to do so. Teachers make effective use of learning support assistants, make strong use of high-quality resources and provide pupils with clear feedback so they know how to improve their work.

In the Foundation Phase the quality of teaching is too variable. In half of lessons observed there, staff fail to plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and have low expectations of what pupils can achieve. This means that learning tasks are often too simple and lack challenge. Consequently in these lessons, pupils fail to make the progress of which they are capable.

Across the school, support staff provide very high-quality teaching and support in class. They have good up-to-date subject knowledge, challenge pupils appropriately and give very effective feedback to teachers. In both key stages, staff place a heavy reliance on the use of worksheets, which limits pupils' opportunities to write independently or at length.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but do not always identify clearly what pupils need to do to improve. However, many older pupils are involved successfully in setting their own targets. The school has introduced a new tracking system, which is being used well to monitor pupils' progress and identify less able pupils in need of additional support.

Parents are generally kept well informed about their children's achievements, wellbeing and development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has good procedures to support pupils' health and wellbeing and to encourage their involvement in school life. It has very effective provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Strong links with St. Nicholas' Church and the high level of care provide in the school contribute well to pupils wellbeing. This is particularly evident in the care and support pupils show for one another.

Staff identify pupils with additional learning needs promptly and ensure appropriate support is put in place as soon as is practicable. Provision for these pupils is good and it enables them to generally make strong progress. Learning support assistants effectively support these pupils' learning. Individual education plans are appropriate and are regularly evaluated and updated. Parents are well informed and fully involved in the process. Good use of a range of external agencies to meet pupils' needs.

The school has procedures and has an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive community where all pupils are valued and respected. It offers equal access to the curriculum for all pupils. There is an appropriate emphasis on recognising and respecting diversity. The calm and well-ordered atmosphere in all parts of the school supports the high standards of pupils' wellbeing.

The school is a well maintained and an attractive environment for the pupils to work in. Throughout the school, the high quality artistic displays, using a wide variety of different media, provide a visually stimulating learning environment.

There are sufficient resources, which are well matched to pupils' learning needs.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

In the two months since her appointment, the headteacher has made good progress in addressing the key priorities of improving standards and provision in the school. This is beginning to have a positive impact, for example in the development of writing by more able pupils in key stage 2.

Communication in the school is very good. As a result, most staff have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They work together very well and effective teamwork amongst staff is a real strength of the school. All teachers take on management roles for aspects of the curriculum and cross school responsibilities. These procedures generally meet the needs of the school well.

The school's arrangements for the management of staff's performance are generally good, particularly in relation to identifying the training needs of all staff. They match the school's priorities for improvement well and are beginning to impact strongly on standards of spoken Welsh.

Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and their responsibilities for bringing about improvement, through visits to similar schools. They are very well informed about pupil outcomes. Consequently, governors provide a strong sense of direction to the school and appropriately hold the school to account for the standards and quality it achieves.

The school has made appropriate progress in meeting local and national priorities.

Improving quality: Good

The school's self-evaluation report contains a comprehensive and evaluative analysis of the outcomes of key stage assessments and the progress that pupils make. It links closely to the priorities in the school improvement plan. The plan also provides clear targets for improvement and these are appropriately linked to costs and staff training. The targets correctly identify those aspects of school improvement that will have the most impact on raising pupils' standards of achievement.

The school is making good progress in taking action to improve outcomes as identified in the school improvement plan, such as improving provision for Welsh language and addressing the consistency of assessment and tracking of pupils' progress.

In the short time since her appointment, the headteacher has established appropriate processes for lesson observations and book scrutiny. However, these are at an early stage of development but are beginning to impact positively on older pupils' assessment of their own learning.

The school has established a useful professional learning community on spelling. Following the work of this group, staff have changed the way in which they reinforce correct spelling. Data shows this is having a positive impact on pupils' ability to spell correctly.

Partnership working: Good

The school has strong and effective partnerships with pupils' families and many community organisations such as the church and sports clubs in the town. Members of sports clubs, such as cricket, tennis and bowls, coach older pupils in these sports. As a result, pupils not only improve their physical skills, but also their confidence and self-esteem. The links with community groups help pupils to learn about their responsibilities as members of the local community. Pupils in the school choir take part in concerts in the evenings and weekends and this improves their sense of responsibility to the wider community.

The regularly produced school newsletter provides families with useful information about school life and events. As a result, families are very well informed about what the school does and this helps to give pupils positive attitudes to school. The school's friends association is very active in raising funds for the school. The funds raised have helped to improve the school environment.

There are very good links with the local secondary school and transition is managed well. Pupils make numerous visits to the secondary school in the year before they

transfer and these help them to settle in quickly and effectively. There is a strong and effective partnership with the on-site pre-school facility. This helps pupils to progress smoothly into the nursery.

Resource management: Good

Overall, the school manages its financial resources very well. A member of the support staff manages all aspects of the budget. Together with the headteacher, she plans and monitors expenditure closely to ensure that the school is appropriately resourced. Governors have an appropriate oversight of all expenditure through monthly monitoring reports. Prudent financial management has enabled the school to make some long term investments such as solar panels, which have reduced the school's expenditure on electricity as well as generating an income each year.

The school deploys and uses most of its teachers and all learning support staff very well. It generally makes successful use of in-school and external training to develop their skills. The provision for teachers' planning, preparation, and assessment time is managed well.

In view of the outcomes achieved by most pupils at the end of key stage 2, the high level of care, guidance and support provided and the efficient management of the budget, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Pupils enter the school with standards that are above those for pupils of a similar age. Trends over five years show that by the end of the Foundation Phase most pupils make good progress. This progress continues in key stage 2 and by the time pupils transfer to secondary education most attain well. Generally, results are above those the average for similar schools and above the average figures for the school's family. In 2011, pupil performance in key stage 2 was the highest in the schools family. The school regularly performs better than schools within Powys and across Wales.

At the end of the Foundation Phase in 2011, when compared to schools with a similar percentage of free school meals, the school was in the lowest 25% of schools for the core subject indicator (the percentage of pupils who achieve the expected level in English, mathematics and science in combination), mathematics and science and in the lower 50% of schools for English. Teacher assessment results for the expected level at the end of the Foundation Phase were below the school's family average. These results are in contrast to those of previous years, when the school was mainly the top 25% of similar schools and performing highly within the family.

For pupils who achieve the higher levels at the end of the Foundation Phase, results vary. Pupils perform well in mathematics and trends are rising. Results fluctuate in English but rose in 2011 to above the family average. Trends are falling in science and are below family averages.

In 2011, all end of key stage 2 results for the expected level 4 placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools and as the best performing school in the family. For pupils achieving the higher level 5, results fluctuate but are generally around the average or better for the family and for similar schools.

Overall, pupils in receipt of free school meals make good progress and achieve as well as other pupils. Many pupils who have additional support with their literacy make at least the expected progress in their reading and spelling. A minority do even better.

There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls in end of key stage assessments, although in their work girls use their reading, writing and oracy skills slightly better than boys.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Response to parents' questionnaires

Twenty-eight parents responded to the questionnaire. Overall, parents express strong satisfaction with the school. Almost all parents report that their child feels safe and is happy in school, that pupils behave well, and that the school is well run. They are all satisfied with the school. A few parents think that the school could provide better information about their child's progress or could be more approachable if parents have concerns.

The parents' views are more positive than on average received from parents in other schools across Wales.

Response to pupils' questionnaires

Forty-three pupils responded to the questionnaire. They were unanimous that:

- they feel safe in school;
- the school deals with any bullying effectively;
- they are taught how to be healthy and get regular exercise;
- they know whom to talk to if worried or upset;
- teachers help them to make progress and are approachable; and
- there are enough resources to help them do their work.

A very few pupils were worried about other pupils' behaviour in class and at breaktimes or lunchtimes.

These views are more positive than on average received from pupils in other schools across Wales.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Rick Hawkley	Reporting Inspector
Eleanor Davies	Team Inspector
Justine Barlow	Lay Inspector
Jane Rees	Peer Inspector
Judith Baker	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FPYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.