



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

**Report following monitoring  
Level of follow-up: significant improvement**

**Mounton House Special School  
Pwllmeyric  
Chepstow  
Monmouthshire  
NP16 6LA**

**Date of visit: November 2017**

**by**

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

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## **Outcome of monitoring**

Mounton House School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in May 2015.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools requiring significant improvement.

## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **Recommendation 1: Improve pupils' attendance and engagement in lessons**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection of May 2015, the school has taken a range of appropriate actions in relation to this recommendation.

The school continues to track pupil absence effectively. It responds appropriately to first day absence and the recording attendance have improved. The school liaises regularly with a range of partners, including parents. As a result, the school has a secure understanding of the reasons for pupil absence.

The school has improved the message it provides around the importance of attending school to both pupils and their parents. For example, it uses past attendance information on each pupil to set meaningful and realistic attendance targets. These personal targets are aligned to the schools points system and pupils are rewarded for their attendance.

There have been notable improvements in the attendance of a fifth of the pupils who were on the roll of the school at the time of the core inspection. Currently, around half of the pupils have better attendance rates than last year.

During the visit, many pupils were punctual to lessons and remained in class for the duration of the lesson. There are very positive relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils are generally courteous and respectful of others.

Teachers and support staff have worked well together to improve the planning and delivery of lessons. The challenge advisor has assisted leaders at the school in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. The school has developed the vocational curriculum for older pupils. As a result, pupils are able to access courses of interest to them. These actions have had a positive impact on pupil attendance and engagement in lessons.

However, overall attendance remains too low and a minority of pupils are persistently absent from school.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum**

### Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since Estyn's visit in November 2016, the school has introduced new arrangements for the co-ordination of skills across the curriculum. Teachers now use information from baseline assessments to inform lesson planning and set specific skillsbased targets for all pupils. The school has appropriate whole school targets for literacy, numeracy and ICT that staff understand and monitor regularly.

Teachers plan meaningful activities that help pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills through clear steps of progression. Teachers make very good use of age appropriate, on-line resources to support pupils learning, to help them to engage in lessons and remain on task.

The school has introduced new lessons to the timetable that include a combination of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Teachers plan these lessons thoughtfully around topics that engage and interest the pupils. Learning objectives are clear, relevant and referenced appropriately to the literacy, numeracy and digital competency frameworks.

The school is developing its systems to track and measure the progress pupils make in developing their skills. In literacy, for example, they use this information well to identify pupils' individual support needs and to set useful learning objectives for pupils. However, the tracking of pupil progress in numeracy and ICT is less well developed.

### **Recommendation 3: Ensure that the behaviour management policy is applied consistently**

#### Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the inspection of 2016, the school has reviewed and improved its procedures for behaviour management. Staff now have a better understanding of pupils' needs and accommodate these needs in their planning. They have made important changes to the curriculum, teaching approaches, tutorial groups and support for individual pupils.

The school continues to take appropriate measures to ensure that staff apply the behaviour policy consistently.

The school has recently refreshed its restorative approach to conflict resolution. This involves pupils' active engagement in discussions with others around appropriate resolutions. As a result, pupils have improved their understanding of the impact of their behaviours on others and how to respond more positively to the challenges they face.

The school continues to track data relating to exclusions and the use of physical interventions. However, the collation and analysis of this data is at an early stage of development. Despite this, and because of the combined effect of the positive approaches adopted by the school, the number of days lost to exclusion and the use

of restrictive physical interventions where pupils are taken to the ground, have reduced significantly.

**Recommendation 4: Ensure that the needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties or moderate learning difficulties are met appropriately**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has made appropriate improvements in planning to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those with specific and moderate learning difficulties.

The school groups pupils appropriately according to their needs and abilities. New pupils to the school attend an induction class where they settle into the routines of the school. The school uses this time to gain a better understanding of the pupil and to ensure that they allocate the pupil to the most suitable class for their needs.

The school has improved the quality of pupil's individual development plans. These now include a valuable range of information and strategies for teachers' use in meeting pupil's needs. These include the adjustments required to support pupils successfully and suggestions for promoting engagement in learning. Teachers' planning takes good account of the needs of individual pupils. For example, learning objectives in lessons relate well to the targets set for pupils in their IDPs.

Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the needs of individual pupils. They use this information collaboratively to provide effective support for pupils. For example, they make good use of the strong professional relationships between individual pupils and staff to assist in managing behaviour.

**Recommendation 5: Address the shortcomings in safeguarding identified during the inspection**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has addressed nearly all of the shortcomings in safeguarding identified during the inspection of May 2015.

The school has established effective links with a range of important strategic partners including the local authority safeguarding team, police, health board and children's services. As a result, the school has a better understanding of the role of other agencies in supporting the wellbeing needs of pupils in order to keep them safe.

Generally, there are appropriate systems in place to ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust and that staff training is updated regularly. However, a very few issues were raised with the school during the monitoring visit.

**Recommendation 6: Improve the rigour and effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The temporary executive headteacher who is in post until August 2018 has provided the school with stable leadership pending the outcome of the local authority review of inclusion services.

Staff are supportive of the leadership team. There is now a positive culture at the school, staff morale is high and all staff feel valued.

The schools' self-evaluation report is generally evaluative and is an honest and accurate reflection of the school. All staff are now included in the self-evaluation process and staff are confident that their views are considered well in school improvement planning. The governing body has a secure role in the self-evaluation and improvement planning process and there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability.

The school is starting to make better use of data. For example, there is a clear analysis of pupil outcomes including progress in literacy, qualifications and achievements.

The school has improved its procedures for observing lessons. These now have a suitable focus on pupil progress and the quality of teaching to meet individual pupils' needs. Staff take part regularly in valuable peer observations.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.