

A report on

Llangattock School Monmouth

**Llangattock-Vibon-Avel
Monmouth
Monmouthshire
NP25 5NG**

Date of inspection: March 2025

by

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

About Llangattock School Monmouth

Name of provider	Llangattock School Monmouth
Proprietor status	Individual proprietor
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent all age
Residential provision?	No
Number of pupils on roll	100
Pupils of statutory school age	85
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	08/05/2017
Start date of inspection	03/03/2025

School context:

Llangattock School Monmouth is an independent day school for boys and girls aged 3 to 19 years. The school is located in a spacious rural site, situated in an elevated position above Monmouth in south-east Wales.

The proprietor is also the principal of the school. The headteacher has been in post since 2020.

There are currently 100 pupils on roll of whom a very few are below compulsory school age, many are aged 4 to 16 years, and a few are in post-16 education. Pupils are taught in eight mixed age classes: primary 1, primary 2, middle, initial, upper 1, upper 2, senior, and house. Around half of the school's pupils have an Individual Development Plan or an Education, Health and Care Plan, and the school receives funding from local authorities for each of these pupils.

The school's admission policy is to accept pupils when the school can meet their particular educational or well-being needs. There is no formal assessment prior to entry. Pupils travel to the school from both the local area and from a wider area, including as far as Warwickshire and Staffordshire.

The school aims to 'encourage the development of the whole child, by providing a truly personalised holistic education, cultivating their awareness of the outside world, empathy for others, social ease and self-confidence leading to academic success'.

Summary

Llangattock School is an inclusive and supportive community in which nearly all pupils feel safe, valued, and engaged in learning. Strong relationships between staff and pupils create a nurturing atmosphere, which is particularly successful in helping pupils overcome previous disengagement with education. The school prioritises well-being, with a focus on emotional support. This ethos is contributed to and embodied by staff at all levels and, as a result, nearly all pupils make rapid personal development, developing their resilience and self-regulation.

The school offers a highly flexible and individualised curriculum, educating pupils based on their 'stage, not age'. Pupils follow personalised timetables, with a minority attending part-time. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with younger pupils' experiences founded on Curriculum for Wales, and older pupils following courses leading to accreditations including BTECs, iGCSEs, and A levels. A tailored approach allows pupils to progress along customised learning pathways at their own pace, with exams entered when pupils are ready. PSHE is embedded across the school, promoting cultural awareness, well-being, and life skills.

Teaching at the school is highly adaptive, with teachers using their subject expertise to modify lessons and learning in response to pupils, employing scaffolding and varied teaching methods to suit each pupil's needs. As a result, most pupils make suitable progress in the development of their knowledge and skills in line with their needs and ability, with a few making very rapid progress. However, in part due to the challenges of its flexible approaches to learning, the school lacks over-arching, structured processes for tracking pupil progress.

Founded on the clear vision articulated by the proprietor, leaders at the school have successfully established a strong, shared sense of purpose among staff. The school is a highly collaborative professional environment, which encourages professional learning. Safeguarding is a priority, with senior leaders closely monitoring pupil well-being. However, rapid school growth and the demands of highly flexible provision limit leaders' capacity for strategic improvement work. Self-evaluation processes are underdeveloped, and the close involvement of the proprietor with operational matters limits their ability to objectively evaluate the school's performance and thereby drive improvement.

The school is not fully compliant with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

Main evaluation

An inclusive community with well-being at its heart

As a result of the highly inclusive, friendly, family atmosphere that leaders have created, nearly all pupils feel safe, happy and supported at Llangattock School. They value the strong relationships they form with their teachers and feel part of a welcoming and inclusive community. Pupils feel known as individuals and trust that, as a result, the school is highly effective in enabling them to make progress. These strengths of provision are particularly effective in enabling pupils to overcome previous disengagement with education.

The school provides a calm, purposeful and supportive learning environment. Staff foster highly positive, nurturing professional relationships. This creates a sense of trust and understanding of individual pupils that encourages them to engage, and sustain engagement with, their learning. As a result, nearly all pupils make rapid improvements in their well-being and personal development.

Nearly all pupils have confidence that their teachers know them very well and want them to do their best. They value that lessons are tailored to their academic levels and staff are extremely supportive. Pupils actively seek recognition of their achievements from staff; they want their teachers to be proud of them.

Throughout the school, most pupils are confident and articulate communicators. They speak assuredly, using a wide range of subject specific and topic related vocabulary. Most pupils are polite and well-mannered. They speak with confidence, and articulate their thoughts and ideas clearly to teachers, support staff and visitors.

Many pupils understand that they and their peers have differing academic needs. Pupils exhibit a high level of tolerance, understanding and respect towards each other, readily accepting each other's differences and behaviours. Nearly all pupils feel that unkindness is rare but that, should it occur, it is dealt with promptly by staff.

Staff consistently demonstrate patience and an understanding of each pupil's unique needs, fostering a positive learning environment. Staff encouragement for pupils supports the development of good attitudes towards learning. For example, pupils improving their phonics skills are effectively guided to remain focused to complete their learning task and their progress is positively reinforced. The diverse needs of the children means that staff must be ready to adapt and be flexible, getting to know the child and their family well so they are in the best position to offer the most effective support.

Teaching assistants (TAs) play a key role in offering emotional and well-being support, particularly for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). They are highly successful at encouraging and focusing pupils. This has a highly positive effect on pupils' ability to self-regulate and, as a result, pupils develop their ability to persevere and develop resilience in line with their needs successfully.

Nearly all parents feel that the small class sizes, and the strong positive relationship between teachers, pupils and home, contribute to supporting each individual pupil's learning and well-being needs. They feel that the school suits the needs of the pupils because of the individual attention received, trusting that staff know the children very well as individuals.

For nearly all members of the school community, its location and setting are key to its appeal and effectiveness. Pupils regularly access outdoor spaces including wooded areas and nearly all participate enthusiastically in outdoor activities such as the 'daily mile'. Pupils benefit from extensive grounds with extended views across the surrounding countryside.

Bespoke curriculum pathways

The school provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to educate pupils according to their 'stage, not age'. Pupils' timetables are highly individualised. A minority of pupils attend the school on part-time basis to support their elective home education or their studies in another school or college. Younger pupils follow a learning pathway linked to the Curriculum for Wales, whilst older pupils are prepared for a range of qualifications and accreditations, including BTECs, iGCSE and A levels.

Pupils move between or across stages to access their learning. For example, pupils may move between the two primary classes, or between primary, middle and initial classes when learning about literacy or numeracy. Older pupils may be entered for iGCSE examinations one or two years early or study an individually tailored programme of GCSEs to maximise their opportunities for success. Most pupils value this flexibility of teaching and learning approach and its responsiveness to their individual needs for academic support or challenge in each subject. The school's flexibility to provide learning, or to support independent learning, at each pupil's level is a notable strength of provision.

The PSHE programme is embedded across the school and pupils experience a wide range of age-appropriate topics. There are opportunities for discussion and celebration to develop understanding of different faiths and cultures. For example, pupils across the Primary classes celebrated Chinese new year and made Diya lamps to celebrate Diwali. The oldest pupils are prepared well for adult life through learning about substance use and healthy relationships. Health and well-being sessions support pupils to develop their

ability to know how to manage their feelings, develop resilience, and be able to persist and persevere.

Learning and teaching

Across the school, teachers demonstrate a strong understanding of subject knowledge and pedagogy appropriate to their 'stage' of education. They use this to support and challenge pupils at different stages in their learning and development appropriately. Teachers delivering subjects leading to public examinations have a secure understanding of their subject and the requirements of these courses.

Most lessons begin with clear routines and high expectations that pupils generally follow. Nearly all teachers are highly skilled at adapting their teaching in response to pupils' contexts and needs, with learning activities and teaching methods re-planned 'in the moment' to ensure that progress is made. Most lessons, particularly for older pupils, are well-paced and include open questioning, supporting active learning. The tutorial-style approach in sixth form is particularly effective in helping pupils progress at an appropriate rate.

During teaching, many staff use a range of communication strategies and methods. They are adept at simplifying concepts, including complex aspects of physics such as photons, using language and approaches that suit each pupil. Scaffolding, suitably adapted to each pupil, is used effectively during learning activities. Further, in nearly all lessons activities, tasks or learning intentions are suitably adapted to meet each pupil at their next learning step. As a result, most pupils make suitable progress in the development of their knowledge and skills in line with their needs and ability, with a few making very rapid progress.

Many primary pupils are keen readers, who take part in shared reading enthusiastically. They read loud with confidence, commenting on their favourite parts and sharing their thoughts. As they progress through primary, many pupils read with developing fluency and apply their phonic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. By the time they reach Key Stage 4, many pupils read for meaning highly effectively and read aloud with fluency and accuracy.

Nearly all primary pupils make suitable progress with their writing over time, writing for different purposes and within topic areas. For example, older primary pupils write about their creations and the steps they took to design and make an object in art. Middle pupils complete a diary entry from the time of King Arthur. A few pupils in the lower senior years independently edit their own work to improve. By the time they reach Key Stage 4, nearly all pupils write extended sentences to answer questions successfully. The writing of a few,

most able, older pupils is highly engaging and employs complex vocabulary and sentence structure to build atmosphere and emotion.

As they move through the school, nearly all pupils develop their mathematical skills suitably, in line with their needs and ability. Many younger primary pupils demonstrate an understanding of numbers up to 10 and accurately compare length of items using non-standard units. Most older primary pupils recognise odd and even numbers, represent three-digit numbers on place value charts and are beginning to understand, and make comparison with, units of measure. In the senior school, many pupils put their mathematical skills to suitable use across the curriculum. For example, pupils studying the photoelectric effect in A level physics successfully calculate the energy passed by photons to electrons and the resulting current.

Pupil progress and attendance

Across the school, the collection, analysis and use of information related to pupil progress is undeveloped. This limits staff's ability to identify factors that may lead to pupil progress accelerating or stalling. For example, the impact of flexible attendance on pupil progress is not yet fully understood nor captured by leaders. In the context of pupils with highly individualised learning programmes, leaders have yet to establish clearly how best to evaluate and measure pupil progress or develop a strategic approach to monitoring pupils' learning and development.

In keeping with the prevalence of pupils for whom prior disengagement with education has been an issue, encouraging attendance is a key part of the school's work. Increasing their attendance is an explicit target for a few pupils. The school is working closely with these pupils and their parents to transition to increased on-site learning. Attendance rates are low compared with mainstream expectations but, for many of the school's pupils, attendance at school is part of their progress journey, and a key element in their social, emotional and well-being target-setting. The school's processes and practice regarding analysis of attendance, and the inclusion of this information in progress tracking, are in the very early stages of development.

Leading and improving

Staff feel highly supported and value the collaborative professional environment established by leaders. As a result of communication that is open, honest and effective, staff feel trusted and listened to. They feel a strong, shared sense of purpose, extending across the whole school, which underpins a close-knit, supportive community. This is a strength of the school.

Leaders have begun to create a culture of continuous professional development, in which nearly all staff feel empowered to seek out and engage with training and learning

opportunities that will increase the effectiveness of provision. The school has made extensive use of a wide range of training, for example learning modules on trauma informed practice. However, leaders' processes for tracking these, and for evaluating their impact, are currently underdeveloped.

Leaders at all levels contribute to an effective culture of safeguarding. A well-established and effective team of senior leaders oversee the day-to-day safeguarding work of the school. They meet regularly to discuss pupils' well-being and to manage any ongoing concerns. Leaders actively seek advice from a range of external partners, including the local authority safeguarding team, should it be required. This ensures that the school's practice is up to date. School leaders and proprietor undertake a suitable range of activities to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. These include safeguarding audits, analysis of pupil information, and pastoral meetings with pupils.

The headteacher and senior leaders work tirelessly on behalf of pupils, parents and staff, and have a clear vision of the school they want to lead. The headteacher is a highly visible presence around the school, and performs many key operational roles, including additional learning needs coordinator (ALNCo) and designated safeguarding person (DSP). As a result, they have a well-developed, first-hand understanding of all aspects of the school's work and are able to act promptly when required. However, the rapid growth in the size of the school over the past few years, along with a highly flexible approach to provision, have meant that teachers and leaders are regularly occupied with operational matters, and therefore lack capacity to act strategically.

The proprietor and senior leaders have established a regular cycle of self-evaluation and improvement planning. However, business matters are not always separated from educational provision sufficiently. In addition, systems to collect and analyse evidence for the quality and effectiveness of provision are underdeveloped. As a result, improvement work is not always focused sharply on improving the quality of education and pupil outcomes.

The proprietor and members of the board of advisors play active roles in the day-to-day operations of the school. The proprietor is highly effective in setting the tone and ethos of the community. However, the close involvement of the board members makes it challenging to create the separation needed to objectively evaluate the school's work and to offer strategic guidance and challenge to school leaders.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure that a Fire Risk Assessment is made by a suitably competent person as soon as is practicable, and that any matters raised by this assessment are addressed [3(14)]

The suitability of proprietors and staff

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Prepare and implement a legionella testing regime, overseen by an identified and suitably trained responsible person [27(a)]
- Prepare and implement an asbestos management plan [27(i)]
- Ensure that there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with school premises regulations [27(l)]

The provision of information

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Safeguarding

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

Recommendations

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

- R1. Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024
- R2. Increase leadership capacity to facilitate focussed, strategic improvement work
- R3. Develop and implement whole-school assessment and progress tracking processes
- R4. Develop and implement quality assurance processes that focus sharply on the quality of teaching and learning

What happens next

Since the school does not meet the standards required for registration, the Welsh Government will require the proprietor to submit an action plan within a specified period of time. This plan will set out the steps that the school will take to meet the standards, and the timescale within which it will complete each step. Welsh Government may then request Estyn to support the school through an improvement process.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and support staff 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/proprietor(s), leaders and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work 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 lessons and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning
- 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 had 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 (where appropriate), 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 (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>)

The report was produced in accordance with section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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Publication date: 08/05/2025