

Report summary for parents and carers on Monmouthshire Pupil Referral Service

Date of inspection: October 2025

Summary

Following a period of instability, the newly appointed seconded head of the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) is bringing much-needed stability and a clear sense of direction. His calm, consistent leadership is helping staff work together more effectively and is beginning to strengthen teaching, learning and curriculum development. This follows a period of frequent staff turnover and weak interim leadership, which disrupted consistency; the new head of PRS has rebuilt systems quickly, restored accountability, and improved morale with a clear vision focused on improving teaching and raising expectations.

Many teachers use their strong subject knowledge to plan engaging lessons that build on pupils' existing skills. Positive relationships between staff and pupils foster confidence, participation and positive behaviour. Pupils benefit from respectful, caring environments where they feel supported to learn. The introduction of professional development and clearer roles for staff is beginning to improve consistency and accountability across the service.

Leadership systems are now operational and show credible capacity to improve within a reasonable timeframe, supported by strengthening partnerships with the local authority and regional consortia.

However, teaching and learning remain too variable. In a few lessons, expectations are too low, and opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and Welsh language skills are missed. Curriculum changes, including new GCSE and vocational options, are at an early stage, so their impact cannot yet be seen. Since September 2025, teaching has been monitored more systematically and staff receive targeted professional training; foundations for improvement are now in place.

Leaders are strengthening the systems for assessment, and behaviour and their consistent use by staff. The use of trauma-informed approaches is helping pupils feel secure and ready to learn. Despite this, attendance remains too low, and too many pupils have part-time timetables, limiting their access to a broad and balanced curriculum offer.

The new additional learning needs co-ordinator is improving support for pupils with additional needs, but the use and monitoring of individual development plans are inconsistent. The management committee is gaining a clearer understanding of the PRS's work but needs to strengthen its ability to challenge and support improvement.

Recommendations and next steps

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

- R1 Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning
- R2 Ensure that quality assurance processes focus on pupil progress and outcomes
- R3 Improve pupil attendance, including the use of part-time timetables
- R4 Strengthen the role of the management committee in evaluating the work of the PRS

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this PRS is in need of significant improvement. The PRS will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the PRS's progress about 12 months after the publication of this report.

Full Report

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#)

© Crown Copyright 2025: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 15/12/2025