

A report on

Mountain Lane C.P. School

**Knowle Lane
Buckley
Flintshire
CH7 3JA**

Date of inspection: June 2026

by

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

About Mountain Lane C.P. School

Name of provider	Mountain Lane C.P. School
Local authority	Flintshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	462
Pupils of statutory school age	348
Number in nursery classes	55
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%)	8.5%
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%)	3.4%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	3.2%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	3.2%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	08/04/2024

A report on Mountain Lane C.P. School
June 2026

Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	02/07/2018
Start date of inspection	01/06/2026

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

Mountain Lane County Primary School is a vibrant and happy school that promotes pupils' learning and well-being successfully. Staff foster warm and caring professional relationships with pupils. This ensures that most engage purposefully in all aspects of school life and behave exceptionally well.

Senior leaders, value the importance of working in partnership with families and strive to develop positive relationships with all parents. They focus diligently on inclusion and ensuring pupils attend school regularly.

The school places a firm focus on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Staff continually introduce and model new vocabulary for pupils and this contributes well to the strong progress they make in developing their oracy skills. Teachers use a range of beneficial approaches to develop pupils' reading skills and enhance their enjoyment of books and stories successfully. Although the school has recently adapted its approach to developing pupils' Welsh language skills, in general, pupils do not develop their Welsh oracy skills well enough.

The school values the importance of physical activity for all pupils. They benefit from the school's extensive grounds and forest area which staff utilise well to provide a variety of purposeful outdoor learning activities. Older pupils appreciate the worthwhile range of extra-curricular opportunities available to them such as football and cheerleading which broaden their skills and confidence effectively.

Teachers provide a meaningful and inclusive curriculum that interests and engages most pupils well. Provision for foundation learning is highly effective. Leaders have a strong understanding of child development and provide ongoing professional learning for staff to support their practice. This has a positive impact. Staff create inviting learning environments that support pupils' independence and creativity successfully.

The headteacher's thoughtful leadership focuses well on securing effective teaching and learning. In many lessons, most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and those with additional learning needs (ALN) make good progress. In a few lessons, a lack of challenge limits the progress pupils make.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Ensure that teaching consistently provides effective challenge for all pupils
- R2 Ensure that all pupils develop effective Welsh language skills

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Mountain Lane County Primary School is a vibrant and happy school that promotes pupils' progress and well-being successfully. The headteacher has developed a purposeful team ethos through thoughtful leadership that focuses well on improving teaching and learning. She has high expectations and promotes a positive learning culture where staff are encouraged to reflect and continually improve their practice. This ensures that overall, teaching is effective and most pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and those with additional learning needs (ALN) make good progress.

Staff foster warm professional relationships with pupils and encourage them to be kind and helpful. Across the school, they establish strong routines and have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. This ensures that most pupils behave exceptionally well and engage purposefully in all aspects of school life.

Spotlight: Removing barriers to improve attendance

Senior leaders value the importance of working in partnership with families and strive to develop positive relationships with all parents. They follow robust systems to monitor pupils' attendance and address any concerns promptly. Senior leaders provide valuable input and support for families when children's attendance falls below an acceptable level. They focus diligently on inclusion and endeavour to understand and remove any barriers to pupils' attendance. The school's supportive approach ensures that most pupils enjoy

coming to school and attend regularly. This work has resulted in significantly increased attendance levels. Leaders have been particularly successful in supporting pupils persistently absent from school to improve their attendance.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their literacy skills. Staff introduce and model new vocabulary for pupils skilfully. This contributes well to the particularly strong progress pupils make in developing oracy skills. Teachers use a range of beneficial approaches to increase pupils' enjoyment of reading including a reading café and engaging 'mystery reader' sessions. Many pupils are enthusiastic readers. The school has effective approaches in place to develop younger pupils' early reading skills. Older pupils benefit from whole class reading sessions, during which, teachers enhance pupils' comprehension of texts skilfully. Most younger pupils develop secure early foundations in writing, beginning with confident oral storytelling and purposeful mark making. By Year 6, pupils write confidently at length for a wide range of purposes.

The school's provision for developing pupils' mathematical knowledge and their digital skills is effective. Teachers of younger pupils often use imaginative approaches based on practical experiences to support learning. This helps to make learning meaningful and supports understanding successfully. Most older pupils use and apply their numeracy skills productively. Many pupils demonstrate comprehensive digital skills which they apply across the curriculum in interesting context well.

The school has recently adapted its approach to developing pupils' Welsh language skills. Younger pupils make appropriate progress and enjoy using simple Welsh words and phrases. Overall, opportunities for pupils to use and practise Welsh throughout the school day are limited and pupils do not make sufficient progress in developing their Welsh oracy skills.

The school provides plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills. Younger pupils benefit from engaging opportunities to enhance their fine motor control, balance and coordination through play. Across the school, physical education lessons support pupils to develop these skills well and make good progress. Older pupils value the wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as football and cheerleading, which help broaden their skills and build their confidence successfully.

In many lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to deepen pupils' thinking and develop their ideas. In these lessons, pupils apply increasingly sophisticated thinking and problem-solving skills in a wide range of contexts. They demonstrate curiosity and the ability to explain their choices with clarity and purpose. In a few lessons, teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently and the pace of learning is slow. In these lessons, pupils do not make the progress they could.

Leaders focus well on ensuring that provision meets the needs of pupils with ALN, and those requiring additional support. Staff provide targeted interventions and work closely with external partners to ensure pupils receive the individualised support they need. Leaders have introduced nurture provision to meet the needs of pupils who benefit from working in a small group setting. This calm and purposeful environment ensures that pupils are settled, happy and make good progress. Across the school a dedicated team of support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' well-being and learning.

Most staff encourage pupils to develop their independent learning skills well. Pupils readily use a range of strategies to overcome any difficulties with their work such as asking a friend or accessing useful resources. From a young age they use helpful learning walls with confidence to support their learning. During lessons, teachers pause regularly to check pupils' understanding, emphasise key points and address any misconceptions well. Regular verbal feedback ensures pupils understand how to improve their work.

Learning experiences across the school are meaningful and inclusive, promoting pupils' understanding of their local area, Wales and the wider world. Pupils contribute purposefully to what and how they learn through varied pupil voice approaches. Teachers support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully through a range of effective approaches such as thought-provoking texts and current affairs resources. The school benefits from extensive grounds which provide valuable opportunities for learning outdoors. This enables pupils to connect with the natural world and develop their knowledge and understanding of local wildlife and plants beneficially.

Spotlight: Effective leadership in foundation learning

Provision for foundation learning is highly effective. Leaders and staff share a strong vision to support young pupils' learning through an appropriate balance of direct teaching and open ended, child led play. Leaders have a strong understanding of child development and provide ongoing professional learning for staff to support their practice. Staff create inviting learning environments that promote pupils' independence and creativity well. Improvements such as the re-development of outdoor provision for pupils in Years 1 and 2, support pupils' personal and social skills particularly well as they make decisions, negotiate and collaborate successfully.

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/carers 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.

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:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2026: This report may be re used free of charge: (a) in any format or medium; and (b) may be translated by or on behalf of an education and/or training provider in respect of which this report relates into any language, in each case provided that it is re used and/or translated accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must, in each case (including in the case of a translation) be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 03/08/2026