



Report summary for parents and carers on Monmouth Comprehensive School

Date of inspection: February 2023

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

Overview

Monmouth Comprehensive School is a vibrant and inclusive community. It is situated in an inspiring building, opened in 2018, which is full of space and light. The facilities contribute positively to pupils' learning and well-being. Staff make good use of these facilities, for example in developing pupils' creativity and physical skills. Many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress in literacy, numeracy and digital skills, and a minority make strong progress. A few pupils are notably articulate in speaking and highly effective in writing. Many pupils think critically and reflectively, and a few have exceptional creative skills. A few pupils do not sustain their concentration well enough in lessons and this hinders their progress.

Most pupils enjoy school and behave well inside and outside of lessons. They are respectful, courteous and confident. The specialist resource base (SRB) for pupils with a wide range of complex learning difficulties is a highly inclusive environment, in which these pupils thrive, and they integrate well into mainstream activities when appropriate. Nearly all pupils in the sixth form display exemplary attitudes to learning and most make good progress. Overall, pupils' attendance has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels and the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals is a cause for concern.

Since his appointment, the headteacher has provided a clear impetus for continuous school improvement that aims to enable all pupils to achieve their potential and enhance their future life-chances. Leaders aim to achieve this through high quality teaching that supports the implementation of Curriculum for Wales. They know the school well but do not always evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills precisely enough.

The school has a coherent approach to professional learning, particularly the development of shared terminology and teaching strategies, which is having a positive impact on learning and teaching. In many cases, teachers' enthusiasm for their subject and thoughtful lesson planning helps pupils to make good progress. The curriculum builds well on pupils' prior learning from previous key stages and there is a wide range of further enrichment activities available for them. The provision to develop pupils' appreciation of Welsh heritage and culture is underdeveloped. In addition, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their ability to speak Welsh.

Pupils' well-being is a high priority for the school and senior leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture which meets the needs of nearly all pupils. The well-being curriculum has been developed collaboratively with pupils to provide beneficial support for their physical, emotional and mental health.

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen processes to raise the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals
- R2 Refine self-evaluation processes so that they focus more precisely on the impact of provision on pupils' learning
- R3 Ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to learn about the language, culture and heritage of Wales

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare case studies for dissemination on Estyn's website on its work in relation to:

1. its approaches to developing Curriculum for Wales
2. the inclusivity and integration of the specialist resource base



School context

Name of provider	Monmouth Comprehensive School
Local authority	Monmouthshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Secondary
Number of pupils on roll	1684
Pupils of statutory school age	1341
Number in sixth form	343
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 Secondary is 20.2%)	10.9%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Secondary is 17.8%)	19.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.9%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.7%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	17/11/2015
Start date of inspection	13/02/2023

© Crown Copyright 2023: 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: 19/04/2023

Please note that the photographs displayed may not be of the school that is the subject of this report.