

**A report on**

**Ven. Edward Morgan R.C. Primary School**

**Caernarfon Close  
Shotton  
Flintshire  
CH5 1AR**

**Date of inspection: February 2025**

**by**

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education**

**and Training in Wales**

## About Ven. Edward Morgan R.C. Primary School

Name of provider	Ven. Edward Morgan R.C. Primary School
Local authority	Flintshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	English Medium only
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Roman Catholic
Number of pupils on roll	187
Pupils of statutory school age	148
Number in nursery classes	24
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 22.9%)	20.4%
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 11.1%)	11.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	20.9%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/02/2013
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	06/03/2017
Start date of inspection	10/02/2025

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](https://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

The Venerable Edward Morgan Roman Catholic Primary School, is a nurturing community-focused school where most pupils, including those with additional learn needs (ALN) and those eligible for free school meals, make good progress. The headteacher and staff work effectively together to ensure that the well-being of pupils is a priority and permeates all aspects of the school's work. Leaders have built strong relationships with pupils and their parents, and the school is at the heart of the community.

Pupils are kind and considerate of each other, and they are very proud of their school. Nearly all pupils are polite and well-behaved. However, although most pupils enjoy coming to school, levels of attendance are too low and a few pupils are absent too often.

The Welsh language and culture have a high profile in the school, and this has a positive effect on the pupils' love of the language. Most pupils enjoy learning Welsh and make good progress during their time in the school.

The learning environment is stimulating and well-resourced and supports the development of pupil independence extremely well in early years. The extensive outdoor areas provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in a range of authentic contexts. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is good and the school's holistic approach to building pupils' self-esteem is a strength.

Staff have developed an interesting curriculum that provides pupils with a range of beneficial opportunities to learn about their local community. Teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills. However, at times pupils do not have enough opportunities to use or apply their skills to other contexts and develop their independent skills.

Parents feel that the school is the heart of the community. They appreciate the wide range of valuable learning experiences, as well as the exceptional care and support provided by staff. Members of the governing body know the school and community very well and provide appropriate support to the headteacher and staff.

## Recommendations

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

- R1. Increase opportunities for older pupils to develop their independence skills
- R2. Continue to improve attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence

## What happens next

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

## Main evaluation

The Venerable Edward Morgan Roman Catholic Primary School is a happy, caring and inclusive school. Staff work together to create a purposeful learning environment for all pupils, where they feel safe and know that adults will support them if they have any worries or concerns. During their time in the school, most pupils make good progress from their starting points, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are eligible for free school meals.

Leaders know the pupils and their families extremely well, and develop trusting working relationships with pupils, parents and governors. These strong partnerships ensure that everyone in the school community feels valued and supported, and that the well-being of pupils and staff is a priority. Provision for pupils' ethical and moral development is good. The school's values and ethos are evident in assemblies, on displays around the school, and through the actions of pupils and staff.

Pupils are very welcoming to visitors and show kindness towards their friends and others. Nearly all pupils are polite, they behave well and treat others with respect. For example, older pupils are patient and encouraging when helping younger pupils to improve their reading skills. Most pupils enjoy school and have a positive attitude towards learning. They listen carefully, show high levels of perseverance, and make worthwhile contributions to their lessons.

Leaders have involved pupils in developing a purposeful and interesting curriculum, that reflects the school context well. Staff ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with a range of beneficial opportunities to learn about their local community, Wales, and the wider world. For example, older pupils learn about Shotton Steel works and its importance to the community. Many teachers use the local area to enhance and enrich learning. For example, pupils visit the local care home to improve their understanding of an older generation and listen to the stories of their lives. Overall, many pupils develop their knowledge and understanding successfully. However, leaders recognise that work to ensure that pupils develop their skills progressively, is at an early stage of development.

Most classes are well organised and this supports learning appropriately. In the early years for example, the environment promotes pupils' independence, curiosity and sustained

engagement exceptionally well, which results in highly effective learning. This practice is developing positively through the school but is not yet fully embedded. Most teachers make good use of the extensive outdoor areas to enhance pupils' learning and well-being.

### **Spotlight 1 Developing the skills and independence of the youngest pupils**

The school's provision for developing skills and independence of the youngest pupils is a strength. Most pupils make significant progress in a short space of time, particularly those starting school at a lower-than-expected level and as a result, most develop the skills and confidence they need to thrive as they move through the school. Staff provide a welcoming environment, that is engaging and develops pupil independence well. Pupils are encouraged to take a lead in their learning and enjoy choosing what they want to do. Staff provide many beneficial learning experiences for pupils to develop literacy, numeracy and physical skills successfully through play. The purposeful use of outdoor areas provides many authentic opportunities for pupils to explore, select materials, solve problems and work collaboratively. For example, pupils use the natural materials they find in forest school to build a Hero's Hideout. They work collaboratively to select and carry branches into a wooded area, describe what they are doing and listen carefully to each other. A few pupils use mathematical terms to explain if branches are too long or short and if they are too heavy to carry.

Most teachers have high expectations of pupils. They use a comprehensive range of assessment information very effectively to plan activities that have a clear purpose and provide an appropriate level of challenge. Teachers adapt their approach to engage the interests of learners and build appropriately on prior learning. Many teachers use a range of suitable questions effectively to ensure understanding and deepen pupils' learning. Although the majority of teachers use feedback purposefully to support learning, it is not used consistently across the school.

School provision for pupils with ALN is good. Staff work closely together to ensure the timely identification of pupils' individual needs and provide appropriate support. They draw on external agencies and specialist expertise to develop their provision so that they can meet the wide-ranging needs of the pupils in their care. For example, the school uses a holistic approach to support pupils to manage their emotions and build self-esteem, so that they are able to participate and thrive in school. This intervention is having a positive impact on attendance, pupil progress and behaviour, and is a strength of the school.

## **Spotlight 2 Improving well-being through a holistic, multi-sensory approach.**

The school provides a calm sanctuary where pupils are supported effectively to manage their feelings and build self-esteem. The school offers a six-week personalised programme, led by a specially trained member of staff. This helps pupils to develop a range of strategies to regulate their behaviour and express their emotions more thoughtfully.

Outside these sessions, staff continue to support pupils in class through universal provision and further drop-in sessions over time. Most pupils who engage with this intervention show improvements in attendance, motivation and pupil progress.

Pupils have many opportunities to influence the life of the school, successfully developing their decision-making skills through participation in a range of leadership groups. Members of these groups take their roles very seriously, organising a variety of activities and events. For example, Digital Champions support specific pupils across the school to develop their digital skills.

The school's passion for Welsh is strong and has a positive impact on the pupils' love of the language and culture. Nearly all pupils are proud to be in a school in Wales. Provision for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills is effective, and most pupils make good progress during their time in the school. Teachers ensure that there are frequent opportunities for pupils to use Welsh in class and during break-times.

Across the school, staff provide effective language models and plan a range of engaging learning experiences that develop pupils' communication skills well. In nursery, for example, pupils enthusiastically describe the ingredients they are using to make breakfast for Big Bear. By Year 6, most pupils express their opinions and thoughts articulately about a range of topics.

Overall, pupils' writing skills develop well. Most younger pupils enjoy mark making and start to write simple words when encouraged by their teacher. The school provides a highly structured approach to the teaching of different writing genres, which ensures that many pupils develop writing skills appropriately over time. However, the way many tasks are presented limits opportunities for pupils to choose how they present their work, be creative in their thinking, or apply their skills to other contexts. Many pupils make very good progress in developing their mathematical and digital skills.

Most pupils develop their reading skills well, and by Year 2, pupils read simple texts accurately. Most older pupils are confident readers and use their skills competently across many areas of the curriculum. Pupils of all ages frequently borrow books from the School Library. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and are developing a love of reading for enjoyment.

Leaders ensure that the culture of safeguarding is well-embedded in the school. The robust systems and processes that are in place ensure that pupils and staff are safe. Pupils have a good understanding about how to stay safe on-line. The school has many sound processes in place and works closely with wider services to manage and improve attendance. However, despite a small increase over recent years, overall attendance remains too low and the number of persistently absence pupils is too high.

The headteacher has high expectations of herself, staff, and pupils, and is committed to the continuous improvement of the school. Staff engage in a good range of professional learning and opportunities to work across the cluster. This means that many develop the skills and confidence to lead key developments across the school. A good example of this is the implementation of the new RE curriculum.

The school's self-evaluation processes are effective and ensure leaders have a sound awareness of the strengths and priorities for improvement. Members of the Governing Body support the headteacher and staff purposefully. They know the school and its community very well and use this knowledge effectively to target the pupil development grant in the areas where it will have the most impact.

### **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 general finances appropriately and have an agreed recovery plan in place to address the current budget deficit. Governors make effective use of the pupil development grant.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer 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](http://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:

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