



Every child will succeed

Mountain Ash
Comprehensive School

Annual Report to Parents

2024-25

Foreword

I am pleased to present our Governors' Annual Report to Parents for 2024/25, which includes a range of useful information about the progress and changes that we saw last year at Mountain Ash Comprehensive School.

2024/25 was another successful year for learner outcomes, with an improvement in our Capped 9 points score, which demonstrates the positive grades that learners achieved in GCSE/BTEC and other vocational qualifications across the full ability range in Year 11 in the summer term. Attendance improved, but there is still work to do here and the number of days lost to learning from exclusions fell.

These successes stem from effective partnerships between the school, parent(s)/carer(s) and learners, all working together towards the same goals. Underpinning these partnerships are the strong links between the Governing Body, staff and Local authority, all of whom work closely to drive standards and support learner wellbeing, to create the best possible environment for learning and success.

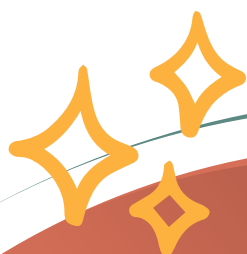
2024/25 was significant for the extensive consultation progress around sixth form provision at Mountain Ash Comprehensive School. 2025/26 will be the last year that the school will host post-16 learners and from September 2026 MACS will become an 11-16 school. Additionally, we consulted widely with parent(s)/carer(s), learners and staff about our core values, finally agreeing on the following:-

M	Motivated
A	Ambitious
C	Caring
S	Self-aware

The Governors and staff at Mountain Ash Comprehensive School are looking forward to 2025/26, continually seeking to improve teaching and learning to support learners to make progress, improve their outcomes and reach their full potential. We have a clear focus in our School Improvement Plan on key national priorities, so that learners develop their skills and make progress in Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competency but also to improve their attendance, become more engaged in school life and develop a sense of belonging to the school.

Gareth Thomas

Chair of Governors



Meetings with Parents

The school hosts a range of meetings with parents across the year, including formal events such as Parents’ Evenings and informal meetings.

We also offer the opportunity to parents to attend other formal events such as:-

- Open Evening
- Year 7 Settling In Evening
- Year 10 Settling In Evening
- Year 11 Settling In Evening
- Year 6 Transition Evening

Other informal events include Parent Forums, ALN Coffee mornings, Shwmae Day events and Attendance drop-ins. There are regular meetings across the year with our Pastoral Team and individual parents, as the need arises, in order to support learners with their academic and wellbeing needs.

Parent voice 2024/25

Feedback from parents who attended some of our Parent forums and parent coffee mornings (ALN) is summarised below:-

YOU SAID	WE DID
School should make more effort to celebrate the good things that are going on with parents and the wider community	<div><div>✓</div>A school Newsletter has been introduced to celebrate school events and activities</div> <div><div>✓</div>Information sheets focusing on key aspects of school - ‘How do we?’</div> <div><div>✓</div>New website</div> <div><div>✓</div>New social media (Facebook and Instagram)</div>
Parents would like more support for parents of children with Additional Learning Needs	<div><div>✓</div>ALN Coffee mornings</div> <div><div>✓</div>Links established with Adult Learning Wales who ran sessions at school, including:-<div><div>◦</div>Autism Awareness</div><div><div>◦</div>ADHD Awareness</div></div>

Clerk to the Governing Body:

Mr Gavin Higgins, Mountain Ash Comprehensive School.

Chairperson of the Governing Body :

Mr Gareth Thomas, c/o Mountain Ash Comprehensive School

Members of the Governing Body:

Name	Category of Governor	Appointed By	Retirement Date
Alison Carter Kimberley Loyns Helen O'Sullivan Scott Treeby	LEA	Council Members	November 2027 March 2029 November 2028 July 2027
Andrew Flaherty Gareth Newton Gareth Thomas Katrina Williams Andrew James	Community Governors	Governing Body	September 2026 July 2027 September 2026 January 2028 May 2028
Alison Beasley Jonathan Jones Claire Lewis Isaac Mensah Emma Rasmussen	Parent	Parents	February 2029 April 2028 November 2027 July 2027 April 2028
Chris Badman Thomas Breeze	Teacher	Teaching Staff	November 2028 October 2029
Gemma Phillips	Staff	Non-teaching Staff	September 2028
Samantha Evans	Headteacher		

Constitution of Governors	Number of Governors
LA Governors	5 (currently there is one vacancy)
Parent Governors	5 (currently there is one vacancy)
Community Governors	6
Teacher Governors	2
Support Staff Governor	1
Headteacher	1
Total	20

If any parent governor(s) resign, arrangements will be made for an election to be undertaken at the appropriate time.

There is currently one vacancy for a parent governor.

School Performance Information

KS4 Interim Measures – Capped 9

The Capped 9 is the new measure of performance for schools. It consists of the best 9 grades achieved by learners, including their best grades in Numeracy/Maths, English, Science and the best other 6 grades achieved in their external exams (GCSEs/vocational qualifications). We were extremely proud of the improvement in the average Capped 9 points score for 2025, which increased by over 12 points.

	Average Capped 9 points score (all)	Average Capped 9 points score	Average Capped 9 points score (girls)
2025	345	346.8	342.1
2024	332.4	324.2	340.4

Attendance

Mountain Ash Comprehensive School has high expectations for learner attendance. Good attendance at school is essential for learners to reach their full potential and achieve the best possible outcomes. There is a direct correlation between good attendance and good performance in examination results and therefore we strive to instil good habits from Year 7 onwards. We reward and celebrate good attendance with end of term celebration assemblies and attendance is a key component of the MACS Award.

There are robust monitoring procedures to raise attendance which includes working closely with the AWS service. As part of our graduated response, we send updates via letters, make home visits, make use of fixed penalty notices and in rare cases may pursue prosecution through the court system. Daily contact is required if learners are unable to attend school.

Our Family Engagement Officer works closely with families where attendance is a concern to offer support, solutions and improve engagement with school.


Overall attendance	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
84.8	4.1%	11.2%

Destination Data

(for any Year 11,12 and 13 learners who left in the summer of 2025)

Destination	Number of learners
University	28
College	137
Training e.g.apprenticeships	2
Employment	9
Seeking employment	5
Other e.g Gap year	1
Unknown	6

Curriculum partnerships



The school also has both long-standing and new partnerships and links with a variety of businesses and agencies to support our Careers and the World of Work programmes and to enrich the curriculum and extra-curricular experiences for learners. We work closely with Careers Wales and are fortunate to have a Careers officer based at the school.

At present our primary Business engagement link is with Hales construction. Other partnership agreements include BAM construction and Wilmott Dixon. Careers Fairs have had support from Panasonic, GE, Gleeds, EHB Solicitors, Peter Lynn and Partners Solicitors and Bute Energy.

Financial statement

Please see below a copy of the school's financial statement for the Financial Year 2024-25.

Financial Statement 2024-2025		
Balance Carried Forward from 2023-24	£174,463	
INCOME		
LEA Funding	£5,635,480	
Income (inc Grants)	£748,059	
Total Income	£6,383,539	
EXPENDITURE		
Staffing		£5,120,097
Premises		£664,923
Supplies & Services		£764,852
Total Expenditure		£6,549,872
Balance Carried Forward to 2024-25	£8,130	

Resource Spending

The school always seeks best value for money and focuses resources on supporting teaching and learning and the pastoral welfare of learners. This includes ensuring that we employ specialist teaching staff, effective support staff and provide both a supportive learning environment and high quality resources to help learners to fulfil their potential.

Action taken by the Governing Body or school

Sixth form consultation

During 2024/25 the Governing Body and the school took part in an extensive consultation process with the LA, parents, learners and the wider community regarding the proposal to remove sixth form provision from Mountain Ash Comprehensive School from September 2026. It was proposed that Year 13 students would continue their education at MACS for the academic year 2025/26, but no new Year 12 learners would be enrolled. Welsh Government approved this proposal in July 2025. The school will remain part of the Cynon Valley Consortium (CVC) for 2025/26 but will be an 11-16 school from September 2026.

Learning Support Class (Complex Needs) consultation

The Governing Body and the school, along with parents, learners and the wider community also took part in a successful consultation process regarding the proposal to establish a new Local Authority Learning Support Class for learners with complex needs at the school from September 2025.

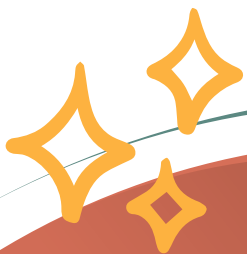
Values consultation

The school consulted widely with learners, staff, parents and Governors during 2024/25 on our values, agreeing on: Motivated, Ambitious, Caring and Self-Aware.



Governors received and approved a range of documents and policies during 2024/25.

They regularly attend school to take part in monitoring, evaluation and review activities including Book Scrutiny and Learner Voice sessions as well as attending Standards Reviews meetings with Middle Leaders.



Community Links

The Governing Body continues to support the development of Mountain Ash Comprehensive School as a vibrant **Community-focused school**, which ‘provides a range of services and activities’, sometimes beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of our learners, their families and the wider community. The school is also committed to supporting community events and fundraising for charity. Our Christmas Fayre in December 2024 raised over £1000 for Y Canolfan Canser, the Velindre Cancer Centre Charity.



The school has a large number of successful partnerships, including regularly working with a range of multi-agencies who support learners and families; Eye to Eye Counselling, the Educational Psychology Service, Attendance Welfare Service, Resilient Families, Behaviour Support Services, Youth Offending Service, Careers Service, Citizens Advice, Additional Learning Needs Services and Childrens’ and Social Services.

Across 2024/25 we developed a new and successful partnership with Adult Learning Wales who regularly hosted classes for the community at the school. These included courses for adults to train to become Learning Support Assistants and information sessions on ADHD and ASD, all of which were incredibly well attended by our local community, including parents.

Wellbeing partnerships

Wellbeing partnerships/activities also included 'drop-in' sessions and extra-curricular activities with the Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS), Empire Fighting Chance, Cardiff City Football Club's 'Premier League Inspires programme' and the police 'School Beat' programme. We also offered in-house wellbeing sporting activities, with our WRU Hub Officer and wellbeing support sessions for targeted learners with our Therapy Dogs.



Curriculum partnerships

The school also has both long-standing and new partnerships and links with a variety of businesses and agencies to support our Careers and the World of Work programmes and to enrich the curriculum and extra-curricular experiences for learners. We work closely with Careers Wales and are fortunate to have a Careers officer based at the school.

At present our primary Business engagement link is with Hales construction. Other partnership agreements include BAM construction and Wilmott Dixon construction. On a wider scale we have links with Panasonic, GE and Gleeds.



Gyrfa Cymru
Careers Wales

Careers Fairs and events across 2024-25 included links with Edwards Coaches, Wilmot Dixon Construction, BBC productions, EHB Solicitors, Peter Lynn & Partners Solicitors, HM Forces (Army), T.Samuels Estate agents and Royal Navy Regional Engagement.

Organisation, Plans and Policies

School Improvement Plan

Governors are responsible for drawing up (in conjunction with staff) the School Improvement Plan. The plan identifies the direction the school will take over a three-year period, in delivering the curriculum. The plan is regularly monitored and revised to take account of progress made and any changes to curriculum requirements.

The School Improvement Plan for the 2024-2025 academic year was approved by Governors. The priorities set included short, medium, and long-term aims, and reflect both local and national education priorities, alongside specific school focused priorities. Progress on the SIP was regularly reviewed by the Governing Body.

Key Priorities	Key Aims
IA1: Teaching & Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To further improve the quality of teaching to effectively meet the needs of all learners, including disadvantaged learners• To improve the planning for, and monitoring of, progression in learners' skills
IA2: Wellbeing, Care, Support & Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To continue to improve attendance• To develop a culture of positive behaviour and attitudes to learning to further improve learner outcomes and reduce exclusions
IA3: Leading and Improving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To improve consistency in the quality and impact of self-evaluation and improvement planning

Additional Learning Needs

The school's policy for the Assessment of and Provision for Learners with Additional Learning Needs is summarised as follows:

The school's policy for the identification, assessment and provision for learners with additional learning needs is consistent with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (approved by the Senedd on 23rd March 2021) under section 4 of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

The school's Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) works closely with all other members of staff to ensure that individual educational plans are developed and implemented to meet the needs of learners, appropriate to those who require them.

The ALNCo also liaises with all members of staff, to ensure that the progress of all learners is regularly monitored and assessed and to ensure that each learner reaches his or her potential.

During the academic year 2024/2025 26 pupils were in receipt of an Individual Development Plan (IDP), with a number of others on track to progress onto IDPs early in 2025/26.

It is the Authority's policy that all children, as far as is possible within the terms of the Education Act 1996 (amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act 2018) should be educated in mainstream Welsh, English and dual language schools within their local communities. The Additional Learning Needs Code 2021 provides statutory advice to professionals regarding their roles and responsibilities and further guidance is provided within the Equality Act 2010.





The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act 2018 clearly states that most pupils with additional learning needs should receive appropriate and inclusive additional learning provision within their local mainstream Welsh, English or dual language school. However, children with significant and very complex learning difficulties may be offered placement in a Learning Support Class within a mainstream school or in a special school.

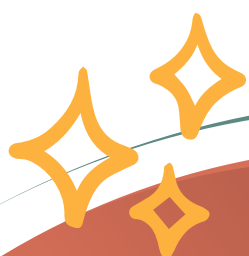
Children with significant and highly complex social, emotional and behavioural difficulties may receive their education via RCT's EOTAS (Education Other Than At School) Provision. Decisions regarding specialist placements are made by the Access and Inclusion Service following consultation with parents, schools, health professionals and other relevant support services.

The Governing Body is mindful of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 in drawing up the School Improvement Plan, and the day-to-day operation of the whole site.

The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils are able to participate in the school curriculum and (where they desire) in activities such as after school clubs, leisure/sporting events and educational visits. All aspects of accessibility, including access to written information are included in the planning process.

The Authority has in place an Accessibility Strategy Plan and in line with this strategy has had an audit of the school site undertaken, as part of an Authority wide brief, to identify any potential barriers and to improve the access to the school.

Learners for whom English is a second language are catered for according to their needs with input from appropriate personnel.



Admissions

RCTCBC is the Admissions Authority for all schools (other than Church schools where the schools governing body is the admissions authority) within the Authority's boundary. The school's admission arrangements are therefore operated in line with the Authority's policy on school admissions which is contained in the publication Starting School Book. The book is made available to parents at the point of their application for their child's admission to school. The contents of this book can also be accessed online on the Authority's website.

Mountain Ash Comprehensive School's Cluster comprises of the following feeder primary schools; Abercynon, Caegarw, Darranlas, Glenboi,, Miskin, Penguelan, Penrhiwceibr, Perthcelyn and Ynysboeth. However, the school welcomes all learners, as they may apply to attend any secondary school they choose, subject to compliance with the Authority's admissions policy.

We have a comprehensive transition programme to support learners in Years 5 and 6 to prepare for the move to secondary school. This involves regular visits to our school as well as staff visiting learners at our Cluster primary schools.

For learners with ALN, healthcare needs or disabilities, the admissions process may include the ALNCo attending key meetings with the learner, parent(s)/carer(s) and Year 6 teacher to share information to support the transition process.

Learners usually remain in the school until they complete year eleven.



School Prospectus

The School Prospectus is updated annually to include any changes required by Welsh Government or other related bodies. A copy is generally issued to parents whose children are starting school for the first time or transferring from Junior/ Primary to Comprehensive School. Excellent links exist between our school and our cluster primaries which enable learners to settle quickly between KS2 and KS3.



Teaching, Learning, Skills and our Curriculum

We endeavour to make the curriculum as exciting and engaging as possible to engage and enthuse our learners. KS3 learners follow the Curriculum for Wales across all subjects with the aim of developing the four purposes of:-

- Ambitious, capable learners ready to learn throughout their lives
- Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society



The Curriculum for Wales also supports learners' development of literacy, numeracy and digital competency skills. To complement the new Curriculum, valuable vocational qualifications such as Equality & Diversity are taught from Year 8 onwards.

Learners who have additional learning needs may be placed in smaller teaching groups. Learners may also receive additional support in literacy and numeracy, where this is required.

The wellbeing of learners is vitally important to us; we run a comprehensive PSE(Pastoral and Social Education) programme which is taught for one hour per fortnight by a specialist teacher alongside a series of PSE days which focus on skills development, team-work, pastoral and social issues, including RSE (Relationships and Sex Education). Additionally, a wide range of wellbeing and interventions run alongside the main curriculum to support learners.

Trips/ visits and extra-curricular activities

Extra-curricular activities and opportunities run alongside the traditional curriculum. In 2024-25 there were trips to Llangrannog, Cardiff Bay, Skiing Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, Firefighter for a Day, numerous sporting activities, visits to universities and many more. At Christmas 2024 we had a wonderful school show 'High School Musical.'



Sporting Successes

Football

Our young footballers had a range of successful experiences across 2024-25. The Year 8 boys team had a great cup run, reaching the quarter final of the Welsh Football Cup for the second consecutive year. Our teams regularly compete in local inter-school tournaments and last year won the Graham Lewis Shield at the Tonyrefail tournament.

Our girls football teams were also very successful with both our Under 13s and Under15s winning the Cynon Valley Tournament, with a number of learners selected to represent the RCT schools football team.

We also had two rising stars Alfie Jones and Leo Papiyrnk both representing Wales in football on multiple occasions, both at home and abroad. They have both since received scholarships at Swansea City FC and Cardiff City FC respectively.



Rugby

Joseff Keating, Logan Kerby, Ruben Main, Cairion Savage and Garyn Voyle were all selected to represent Cynon Valley Schools in the rugby Dewar shield.

Netball

Ivy Evans and Lowri Davies were selected to represent Glamorgan Valley County Netball



Use of the Welsh Language - Communication

Mountain Ash Comprehensive School is an English medium school but we work very hard to promote the Welsh language by using incidental Welsh, celebrating our Welsh heritage and culture and helping our learners to develop a sense of Cynefin.

We host a vibrant, inclusive and entertaining annual Eisteddfod each year along with other cultural events. We celebrate Welsh language and culture through Shwmae Day, Nadolig, Santes Dwynwen and a Languages in the Workplace event for learners in KS4, which is well supported by local businesses.



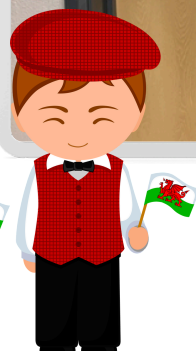
Siarter Iaith Gold Award

Our Criwiau Cymraeg have been working incredibly hard over the last 2 years and have achieved the highest accolade, gaining the school the Siarter Iaith Gold award in the Spring of 2025.



Across 2024-25 they celebrated and promoted the use of Welsh through an exciting range of activities. They worked successfully with other secondary schools such as Ysgol Afon Wen and Ysgol Gyfun Maesteg and with our Digital Leaders at MACS. They also formed links with local primary schools including Ysgol Gynradd Darrenlas, Ysgol Gynradd Abercynon, Ysgol Gynradd Glenboi, Ysgol Gynradd Penrhiwceibr, Ysgol Gymraeg Abercynon, Yr Urdd and Ysgol Y Hendre.

Activities included attending cultural and music events such as Parti Bach Ponti, Theatr Soar, a Welsh Music Day and the National Eisteddfod. Our Criwiau Cymraeg also took part in workshops with Menter Iaith, Cardiff University, Ameer Davies (presenter) and the Languages in the Workplace day as well as hosting parents at events such as Shwmae Day.



Celebrating success and having fun!

Throughout the year we take every opportunity to support and celebrate our learners achievements and provide opportunities for them to engage in fun curricular and extra-curricular activities. Our staff also go the extra mile to support these events. Across 2024-25 we celebrated World Book Day, International Day of Languages, Saint Dwynwen's Day, Anti-Bullying Week Odd Socks Day, Sports Day, Staff V Learners sports events and a Wellbeing Picnic.



Healthy Eating and Drinking

The school works hard to promote healthy eating and drinking through the curriculum. The Personal Development, Health and Wellbeing faculty thematic approach for the New Curriculum in Year 7 is Positive Mental Health. Within this teaching and learning programme across PSE, PE and Food learners study the importance of healthy food as part of maintaining positive mental health and helping them feel good, inside and out. The Food curriculum in Years 7 and 8 has been adapted to include healthier recipes that the learners can make with ease whether they are in school or at home. They are encouraged to use the 'Eat Well' plate when thinking about a meal and also the importance of a balanced diet.

Learners learn about eating the right food when carrying out a physical activity/sport. If learners study PE or Food at GCSE they learn about nutrition, calorie intake and eating a balanced diet. Learners are encouraged to drink water and to keep hydrated to facilitate good concentration and effective learning. This is also encouraged when participating in PE lessons.



Provision of school toilet facilities

There are 4 permanent sets of designated learner toilets located across the school:-

- ground floor corridor near Technology Faculty
- ground floor corridor Maths Faculty
- ground floor corridor near reception
- ground floor corridor near Sports barn
-

There are excellent arrangements in place for cleaning toilets, including the employment of a housekeeper for this during the school day, alongside the school caretakers.

Term Dates and Holidys 2025/26

Term	From	To
Autumn 2025	Monday, September 1	Friday, October 24 2025
Half Term	Monday, October 27	Friday, October 31 2025
Autumn 2025	Monday, November 3	Friday, December 19
Christmas Holidays	Monday, December 22	Friday, January 2 2026
Spring 2026	Monday, January 5	Friday, February 13
Half Term	Monday, February 16	Friday, February 20
Spring 2026	Monday, February 23	Friday, March 27 2026
Easter Holidays	Monday, March 30 2026	Friday, April 10 2026
Summer 2026	Monday, April 13 2026	Friday, May 22 2026
Half Term	Monday, May 25 2026	Friday, May 29 2026
Summer 2026	Monday, June 1 2026	Monday, July 20 2026

Mon 1 Sept 2025 and *Monday 20 July 2026 will be designated INSET days for all LEA Maintained Schools.

The remaining three INSET days to be taken will be at the discretion of each individual school following appropriate consultation with staff.

*It is intended that this INSET Day will either be taken on Mon 20 July 2026 or at an alternative time for example in the form of twilight sessions.

All schools will be closed on Monday 4 May 2026 for the May Day Bank Holiday.

Significant dates:

Christmas: Thursday 25 Dec 2026

Easter: Good Friday 3 April 2026

Easter Monday 6 April 2026

May Bank Holidays: Monday 4 May 2026 &
Monday 25 May 2026





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Mountain Ash

Comprehensive School



Website

www.macs.uk.net



Phone

01443 479199



Address

New Rd, Mountain Ash CF45 4DG



E-mail

admin@mountainashcomprehensive.rctcbc.cymru



Social Media

[@mountainashcomprehensiveschool](https://twitter.com/mountainashcomprehensiveschool)

