



Annual monitoring inspection report on:

Priory Talocher School

Date of inspection: July 2014

by

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

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Context

Priory Talocher School is an independent special school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) and associated needs. It is administered by Priory Education Services. This is part of the wider Priory Group, which has over 30 schools and specialist colleges across England and Wales.

The school provides education for pupils who are unable to attend mainstream schools as well as pupils who are resident in Priory children's homes.

Currently there are 21 pupils at key stage 3 and 4. Of these, 18 are boys and three are girls. Thirteen are looked after by local authorities in Wales and England. All 21 pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN).

Estyn carried out a full inspection at the school in June 2013.

Recent staffing changes include the appointment of a specialist mathematics teacher/numeracy co-ordinator and a specialist science teacher.

Main findings

Strengths

The school's strengths are that:

- it has made good progress in addressing the recommendations of the 2013 inspection;
- the headteacher and senior management team provide strong, highly effective leadership;
- staff have clear roles and responsibilities and work very well as a team;
- teachers have relevant and appropriate qualifications and experience, and plan and deliver lessons well;
- pupils make good progress in their learning and improve their behaviour and social skills well over time; and
- pupils benefit from an innovative range of learning opportunities.

Areas for development

The school's areas for development are that:

- although it has made good progress in addressing all of the recommendations from the previous inspection, work relating to two of the recommendations is at an early stage; and
- the process of self-evaluation is well-embedded in the school. However, a few sections of the self-evaluation report are too descriptive and do not evaluate rigorously enough the impact of certain aspects of school life on pupils' standards.

Recommendations

- R1 Continue to improve opportunities for staff to develop and share best practice by visiting outside settings
- R2 Ensure that all pupils have appropriate opportunities to gain relevant accredited qualifications in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT)
- R3 Ensure that the self-evaluation report is evaluative and that it has a clear focus on pupils' standards

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous note of visit or inspection report

Recommendation 1: Increase opportunities for teachers to observe best practice in teaching both within the school and in other similar settings

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The head of lower school and curriculum leader has devised a two-year programme for all teachers to observe best practice within the school, and in similar settings. Teachers receive appropriate training to carry out peer observations and complete the lesson observation and good practice form produced by the school.

All teachers have observed each other at least once within the school. They discuss the good practice seen in the lesson with the teacher and report back to the whole staff on what they have learned and how they will improve their own practice. Examples include adopting a themed lesson approach and appropriate behavioural strategies to make sure that pupils remain on task and engage well with their learning.

The programme for 2014-2015 will enable all teachers to observe best practice in other similar settings as well as within the school.

The school has made good progress with this recommendation. However, it is too early to measure the full impact of the programme.

Recommendation 2: Use data more effectively to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and to inform planning

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school uses an increasing range of appropriate assessments to measure and track pupils' progress. Data is collected three times a year and analysed effectively by managers and teachers. Teachers use this data efficiently to identify more able pupils, to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and to plan for curriculum development. Following the analysis of the data, the school has rearranged the teaching groups, for example in mathematics. This is impacting positively on pupils' achievements in learning and on their wellbeing.

The school arranges appropriate support and intervention programmes for pupils who are not making the expected progress in certain areas of the curriculum. These include structured reading schemes, literacy booster programmes and numeracy programmes.

The school has made good progress in addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 3: Increase opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT and numeracy skills across the curriculum

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has recently appointed a specialist mathematics teacher and numeracy co-ordinator. Opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum have increased. These opportunities are well planned and effective. Numeracy is integrated effectively into lesson-planning and a new whole-school beekeeping enterprise project gives pupils valuable opportunities to use their numeracy skills in a real life situation. The school arranges appropriate numeracy sessions during assemblies and organises effective whole-school numeracy challenges.

The ICT suite is used regularly and the school is in the process of creating a second ICT suite to increase further the opportunities for all pupils to develop their ICT skills fully across the curriculum. In addition, the school has improved the range of ICT resources in all classrooms. For example, all classrooms now have interactive whiteboards and seven new desktop computers are available in specific subject areas. All staff have access to electronic tablet computers to identify further opportunities for pupils to develop and use their ICT skills. Pupils use ICT well to create PowerPoint presentations, research the internet, produce spreadsheets and databases and complete their coursework.

The school has made good progress in addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 4: Increase opportunities for pupils to gain accredited qualifications in literacy, numeracy and ICT

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has made good progress in increasing the range of appropriate accredited courses in literacy, numeracy and ICT. They have considered a wide range of accredited courses and adopted a flexible approach to make sure that the courses they offer meet the changing and diverse needs of the pupils. They have introduced BTEC Workskills and City and Guilds Functional Skills in literacy and numeracy and WJEC Essential Skills Wales and Edexcel BTEC IT Users courses in ICT.

The school is introducing further courses in 2014-2015 which include AQA Adult Literacy and Adult Numeracy Courses and WJEC Functional Skills ICT courses.

However, it is too early to see the impact of the increasing range of accreditation on pupils' achievements at the end of key stage 4.

Compliance with the standards for registration

Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Standard 2: The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 2.

Standard 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Standard 4: The suitability of proprietors and staff

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Standard 5: Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 5.

Standard 6: The provision of information

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 6.

Standard 7: The manner in which complaints are to be handled

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 7.

Recommendation regarding registration

When considering this school's registration the National Assembly for Wales may wish to have regard to the following recommendation:

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Inspectors' judgements on this annual monitoring inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.

School information

School	Priory Talocher School
School number	679/6014
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring Inspection
Date of visit	2 and 3 July 2014
Proprietor	Priory Education Services
Staff	7 Teachers, 1 TA, 1 Pastoral Support Worker, & 1 Head
Number of pupils	21
Provision	Day provision
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school	SEBD & associated needs
Last Section 163 inspection	June 2013
Last annual monitoring inspection	September 2012
Last CSSIW inspection	N/A

Team information

Reporting Inspector	Ann Dackevych
Team Inspector	Meinir Rees