



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**The Branas School**

**Date of inspection: November 2018**

**by**

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

## About The Branas School

The Branas School provides specialised education and therapy for boys who have complex social, emotional and behavioural needs and moderate learning difficulties. The school is owned and managed by Caretech Ltd.

There are 17 pupils on the school roll. All pupils speak English as their first language. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Pupils are looked after by local authorities in Wales and England and live in the children's homes operated by Caretech. The children's homes are registered with the Care Inspectorate Wales. The present headteacher has been in post since January 2018.

## Main findings

### ***Strengths***

Most pupils make good progress in their learning and many key stage 4 pupils gain a wide range of qualifications. Over time, nearly all pupils improve their self-esteem, tolerance of others and their behaviour.

There is an appropriate focus on pupils' learning and progress with useful schemes of work across subjects. Most teachers plan stimulating learning activities that meet pupils' individual needs well.

The school has developed effective procedures for the assessment of pupils' literacy and numeracy. It identifies pupils' specific needs accurately and provides a range of helpful interventions.

The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership to the school. She has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Since her appointment, she has implemented a wide range of improvement activities such as learning walks, regular meetings with care and other staff, and more accurate identification of individual pupils' learning needs.

Close work between the school and other staff ensure that regular communication usefully informs teachers' planning. This is having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and has led to a significant reduction in the incidents of poor behaviour at the school.

### ***Areas for development***

The school regularly reviews pupils' progress in relation to their individual targets. Teachers have a good understanding of individual pupils' learning and emotional needs. However, they do not consistently make good use of the information about pupils' learning needs when planning lessons.

Although planning for pupils to develop their skills across the curriculum is improving, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and develop their skills, especially in numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum.

## **Recommendations**

**The school should:**

**R1 Ensure that teachers use information on pupils' ability and progress when planning lessons to meet pupils' learning needs**

**R2. Further strengthen the provision for pupils to develop their skills across the curriculum, including in vocational, enrichment and outdoor activities**

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

### **Recommendation 1: Ensure compliance with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003**

Since the last annual monitoring visit, the school has made strong progress to ensure compliance with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. The school now meets all of these regulations.

### **Recommendation 2: Ensure that the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills (ICT) is co-ordinated across the curriculum, including through vocational courses and outdoor education activities**

The school uses suitable national frameworks to support its planning for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Curriculum leaders are developing useful guides and resources to support teachers in the planning and delivery of these skills across all subjects. Pupils have started to benefit from more regular opportunities to practise and extend their literacy and numeracy skills across subject areas, and enjoy the activities offered, such as taking part in the school literacy marathon.

Planning for ICT across the curriculum, and the co-ordination of skills across the programme of enrichment activities, vocational courses and outdoor pursuit activities, remains underdeveloped.

### **Recommendation 3: Develop a formal framework to assess the progress that pupils make in their attendance, behaviour and learning whilst at the school**

The school has sound systems and processes in place to assess the progress pupils make in their attendance and behaviour. Consistent use of a structured points system enables staff to reward and motivate pupils' positive behaviours. Information from the points system is used well to monitor pupils' progress over time and across the range of learning experiences. This helps the school plan changes in provision to support pupils to make further improvements and reduce unnecessary risks. Analysis of this data is beginning to provide staff with helpful information about patterns of behaviour to support teachers' planning.

Assessment of pupils' individual learning needs is effective. Targets in individual plans are agreed with pupils and staff, and shared with parents to ensure that the next priorities for learning are understood by all. Targets are well-monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure pupils' progress.

Information from half-termly progress reports and bi-monthly multi-agency meetings on pupils' progress are used well to inform planning for each pupil.

It is too early to evaluate the impact of the new formal framework to assess the progress that pupils make in their learning whilst at the school.

**Recommendation 4: Address the issues in safeguarding identified during the annual monitoring visit**

The school has taken suitable actions to address the issues in safeguarding identified during the last annual monitoring visit. For example, the revised policies for anti-bullying, behaviour, the use of physical intervention, educational visits, and safeguarding and child protection are applied consistently and implemented effectively.

The revisions to the roles of leaders and staff and to how pupil behaviour is risk-assessed, recorded and monitored, helps to ensure continuity in key areas of safeguarding such as the use of physical interventions. Staff training to support them in their roles is comprehensive, and valuable provision is also made for both staff and pupils to reflect on serious incidents in a dedicated area.

The revised systems and processes, coupled with enhanced changes to curriculum and pastoral provision, have made a positive contribution to improvements in pupils' behaviour, particularly in the reduction of challenging incidents.

**Recommendation 5: Establish a robust quality assurance cycle that has a clear focus on pupil progress and outcomes**

The headteacher, supported by the head of education, is developing suitable procedures to quality assure the work of the school. She has introduced learning walks, book scrutiny and undertaken lesson observations as part of the cycle of activities. It is too early to evaluate the impact of these new arrangements.

Formal processes to monitor and collect information about individual pupils' progress provide the school with good quality information to inform individual targets. However, the links between these procedures and teachers' planning are not strong enough. This means that information about pupils' progress does not consistently inform teachers' planning.

Arrangements to quality assure the effectiveness of teachers' planning, their literacy and numeracy interventions and to moderate teacher assessments of pupils' work are in the early stages of development.

## **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, and cultural development 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 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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 4.

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

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

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

## **Recommendation regarding registration**

When considering this school's registration the Welsh Government 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 limited inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.



## 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 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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