



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

**Annual monitoring inspection report on
Marlowe St David's Education Unit**

Date of inspection: June 2016

by

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

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Publication date: 09/08/2016

Context

Marlowe St David's School is a small independent school for boys and girls aged from seven to eighteen years. It is situated in a rural setting in north Pembrokeshire. The school is owned and managed by Marlowe Child and Family Services Ltd. It was opened in 2000.

The school is registered to admit up to 20 pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). There are currently 15 pupils on the school roll. Around half of the pupils live in the company's children's homes. Eight pupils are looked-after by local authorities. Nine pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN). All pupils speak English as their first language. None come from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The school currently employs three full-time teachers and one part-time teacher. There are three classes, and pupils are grouped according to their age and ability.

The proprietor has recently restructured management responsibilities within the company's wider organisation. An acting headteacher joined the school in May 2016 to provide cover while the proprietor carries out a recruitment process to appoint a permanent headteacher.

Main findings

Strengths

- Staff create a comfortable and non-threatening atmosphere that gives pupils confidence and encourages them to engage in education.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors.
- Staff and pupils develop positive professional working relationships.
- Since his arrival, the acting headteacher has worked swiftly to assess the school's strengths and areas for improvement. He has started to review and update school documents. For example, he has reviewed and improved the school's safeguarding policy and procedures appropriately.
- The school carries out suitable baseline assessment of pupils on entry and maintains comprehensive pupil records.
- The accommodation is spacious and well maintained, and it provides a suitable learning environment.

Areas for development

- The school has made limited progress in addressing the recommendations of previous Estyn reports. Therefore, there is little change in the recommendations of this inspection.
- Although in previous inspections the school's policies met the necessary regulations, during this visit the school was unable to provide the most recent copies. Many of the school's policies need updating and review to ensure that they refer to the correct personnel and are specific to the school. A few policies include detail that is not relevant.
- The school's curriculum policy is too brief. It does not provide information about the provision at each key stage or specify the requirements for planning. It is not clear how, or if, the policies for literacy and numeracy are implemented.
- Staff record appropriate risk assessments for off-site visits and activities. However, managers do not always sign and date the forms to approve the activities.
- The first aid policy is too brief and does not provide staff with enough helpful guidance, for example on how to deal with spillages or the policy for administering medicines. There is no information about the contents of first aid kits.
- The school's admissions register is unclear and does not include all the information that is required, for example pupils' sex and dates of leaving.

Recommendations

- R1 Comply fully with the regulations for registration
- R2 Ensure that all policies are up-to-date, are specific to the school and are reviewed regularly
- R3 Ensure that the school development plan identifies clear and manageable targets for improvement
- R4 Develop a more suitable performance management system that focuses on standards and teaching
- R5 Analyse pupil data more effectively to inform planning

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

Recommendation 1: Ensure that key strategic priorities are met in a timely way

This recommendation has not been addressed.

The school has been very slow to make necessary improvements. It has made limited progress against most recommendations from previous inspection reports.

The school development plan does not prioritise key strategic areas for development well enough. The aims and objectives are generally unclear and success criteria are not specific. As a result, it is difficult for staff to know exactly what is expected and whether aims and objectives have been achieved. Success criteria focus mainly on provision, and not enough on pupil outcomes.

The report does not include clear timescales for completion of actions, or for monitoring progress against actions. As a result, priorities are not met in a timely way.

Recommendation 2: Establish robust performance management for all staff

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has introduced a system to manage staff performance that is based on the wider company's procedures. However, the system is currently under review because managers recognise that it is too complex and is not appropriate in a school setting.

The headteacher or a peer teacher carry out lesson observations and make a formal record of their judgements, but there is no regular programme of observations.

Although these observations generally identify areas for improvement within the lesson, there is too little focus on pupils' standards. The information is not used well as part of the performance management system, for example to set targets to improve standards and teaching. It is not clear if there is any follow-up to consider staff progress in improving their classroom practice.

Through the performance management system, staff identify training needs, but these are generally linked to operational matters, for example health and safety

Recommendation 3: Use data effectively to track pupil progress and inform planning

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has started to collect a range of individual pupil data. This includes information on pupils' reading and spelling ages as well as their progress in National Curriculum subjects. Data on reading and spelling ages is presented clearly in graph form. This enables staff to identify the progress that pupils have made.

The school tracks pupil progress against National Curriculum levels in a wide range of subjects on a termly basis. Pupils have a set of targets for each subject. There are clear records of whether pupils are working towards their targets, meeting their targets or exceeding their targets.

However, staff do not analyse data well enough at either an individual pupil or whole school level, in order to identify strengths and areas for development. They do not use data effectively to inform planning

Recommendation 4: Visit other providers to observe good practice

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Staff have had a very few opportunities to visit other local schools to observe good practice. The school is beginning to develop a useful link with the proprietor's school in Gloucester.

Compliance with the standards for registration

Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school

The school does not fully meet the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school should:

- have a curriculum policy set out in writing and supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and implement it effectively. [1(2)]

Standard 2: The spiritual, moral, social 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

The school does not fully meet the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school should:

- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to Welsh Government Guidance [3(2c)]
- provide and implement a satisfactory written policy on First Aid [3(6)]
- maintain an admission and an attendance register in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 [3(9)]

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 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 National Assembly for Wales may wish to have regard to the following recommendation:

The school does not currently meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. To comply fully with these requirements, the school should address the issues identified above for each standard.

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

School information

School	Marlowe St David's Education Unit
School number	6686014
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	06/06/2016
Proprietor	Steve Miller Chief Executive Marlowe Child & Family Services Ltd PO Box 283 Gloucester GL19 3YE
Staff	3 Full time teachers 1 Part time teacher 6 Teaching assistants
Number of pupils	15
Provision	Day
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school	ASD, BESD, MLD, SpLD
Last Section 163 inspection	01/02/2014
Last annual monitoring inspection	01/02/2015
Last CSSIW inspection	00/00/0000

Team information

Mrs Rosemary Lloyd Lait	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Caroline Rees	Team Inspector