



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

**Annual monitoring inspection report on
The Branas School**

Date of inspection: February 2017

by

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

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Context

The Branas School provides specialised education and therapy for boys aged 11-16 who have complex social, emotional and behavioural needs and moderate learning difficulties. The school is owned and managed by Caretech Ltd.

There are 18 pupils on the school roll. Nearly 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 and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales.

The school was last inspected by Estyn in June 2014. Since the previous annual monitoring visit there have been frequent changes to the leadership at the school. The present acting headteacher has been in post since January 2017.

Main findings

Strengths

Nearly all pupils attend school regularly and are punctual to their lessons.

Over time, teachers and the residential care staff who provide support in the school build purposeful relationships with pupils. Staff have a sound understanding of pupils' social and emotional needs and respond sensitively to incidents at the school.

Older pupils have opportunities to gain a suitable range of recognised qualifications in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Most pupils demonstrate appropriate behaviour in lessons and around the school.

The curriculum includes suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their personal and social skills through a wide range of educational activities including outdoor education and vocational courses.

The classrooms and the outdoor areas provides an appropriate learning environment with a suitable range of resources.

Areas for development

The majority of teachers identify appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in their lessons. However, planning for the development of pupils' numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

Prior to placement, the school receives very limited information about pupils' learning needs. Over time, the school has established an appropriate baseline assessment of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, there are no formal processes in place to re-assess pupils' skills or track the progress they make in lessons.

Since the previous annual monitoring visit, the school has undergone significant changes in leadership and management. As a result, progress in respect of the previous recommendations has been limited.

A minority of the documents and policies in relation to safeguarding at the school are out-of-date. Many do not reflect current practice at the school. Very few of these policies make appropriate reference to the most recent Welsh Government guidance.

The acting headteacher is beginning to develop a culture of self-evaluation and improvement planning. However, the range of quality assurance processes in place at the school is limited. For example, the school does not robustly analyse individual pupil and school level data on behaviour, attendance or progress in lessons. As a result, leaders do not have enough robust first hand evidence to come to a view on the quality of provision and standards at the school.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure compliance with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003
- R2 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
- R3 Develop a formal framework to assess the progress that pupils make in their attendance, behaviour and learning whilst at the school
- R4 Address the issues in safeguarding identified during the annual monitoring visit
- R5 Establish a robust quality assurance cycle that has a clear focus on pupil progress and outcomes

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

Recommendation 1: Co- ordinate the provision for skills across the school to ensure that pupils build systematically on existing knowledge and understanding

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Overall, the planning for the development of pupils' skills across the curriculum is still underdeveloped. The school is beginning to develop appropriate plans for pupils to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum. Very recently, the literacy coordinator is beginning to map opportunities to develop pupils' communication, writing and reading skills across the curriculum. However, this work is at a very early stage. The planning for numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum is limited. There has been no strategic direction or support for the coordination of this work at the school.

Recommendation 2: Increase opportunities for teachers to observe best practice in teaching both within the school and in other settings

This recommendation has not been addressed.

Since the previous annual monitoring visit, teachers have had a very few opportunities to observe each other or visit other settings to observe good practice. The acting headteacher and head of education have recently undertaken a cycle of lesson observations for all staff. However, the outcomes of these observations have not been analysed to enable the school to share best practice.

Recommendation 3: Increase opportunities for pupils to understand and celebrate a wider range of cultures and traditions

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

In a minority of subjects, teachers plan sufficiently to ensure pupils experience opportunities to learn about a wider range of cultures and traditions. The personal and social education scheme of work identifies valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy relationships, tolerance and the need to respect others. However, the co-ordination of these opportunities across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

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)]
- ensure that the education provided fulfils the requirements of pupils' statements [1(2e)]
- ensure that teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of the pupils, and ensure that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons [1(3d)]
- ensure that there is a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and information from such assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress [1(3)(g)]
- put in place a framework by which pupil performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents and/pr, by national norms [1(4)]

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 to prevent bullying which has regard to National Assembly circular 23/03 "Respecting Others: Anti bullying Guidance" [2(2a)]
- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school, which has regard to Welsh Assembly Government Guidance: 'Educational Visits- A safety guide for learning outside the classroom' 2008 [3(2c)]
- prepare and implement a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils, which sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving [3(2)(d)]
- prepare and implement a satisfactory policy on First Aid [3(3)]
- keep written records of sanctions imposed on pupils for serious disciplinary offences [3(6)]

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

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:

- ensure that the school supply information on pupils with statements to the responsible local education authority as may reasonably be required for the purpose of the annual review of the statement

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	The Branas School
School number	6636040
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	15/02/2017
Proprietor	Branas Isaf (Part of CareTech Groiup)
Staff	6 fulltime teachers, 2 parttime teachers (0.6 FTE), 1 parttime teacher (0.2 FTE), 1 Vocational Curriculum and Activity Manager, 1 Administrator
Number of pupils	18
Provision	Day
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school	EBSD
Last Section 163 inspection	02/06/2014
Last annual monitoring inspection	04/05/2015
Last CSSIW inspection	Insert text

Team information

Ms Margaret Elisabeth Davies	Reporting Inspector
Mr Huw Davies	Team Inspector