



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

Annual monitoring inspection report on

**Bettws Lifehouse
The Old School House
Bettws Cedewain
Newtown
Powys
SY16 3DS**

Date of inspection: May 2018

by

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

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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court

Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website:

www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2018: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 06/07/2018

Context

Bettws Lifehouse is an independent special school operating at two sites in Powys. The school's main site is in a rural location close to Newtown. The school's second site is located close to the centre of Welshpool.

The school opened in 2007 and is registered to provide day education for up to thirty pupils aged nine to nineteen years who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and moderate learning difficulties (MLD). Currently there are 28 pupils on roll. Most pupils are placed by Shropshire local authority.

All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or education health care plans, and a very few pupils are looked after by their placing authority.

Main findings

Strengths

The curriculum provides a broad range of learning experiences that meet the needs of pupils well. Teachers plan lessons with clear learning objectives and stimulating activities that interest pupils and motivate them to learn. Staff provide sensitive, support for pupils' social, emotional and wider learning needs. As a result, nearly all pupils engage well in lessons and make strong progress in achieving their targets. Many pupils make particularly strong progress in developing their self-confidence and the skills they need to manage their behaviour successfully.

The school's mentoring programme provides highly effective arrangements for pupils to contribute their views, reflect on their progress and review their targets.

Leaders provide strong direction for the work of the school. They communicate a set of clear aims that centre on providing pupils with individualised learning pathways to help them develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to reach their potential. Staff at all levels show a strong commitment to these aims and work together effectively to meet pupils' needs.

Areas for development

Leaders have introduced an information management system to help staff record and track pupil progress. However, this system is newly in place and teachers have not embedded the system across the curriculum.

Recommendations

R1 Continue to embed the information management system across the curriculum to record and track pupil progress

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

Recommendation 1: Develop a consistent procedure to establish a clear base line of pupils' needs and abilities from which to assess future progress

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

All pupils have an assessment period on entry to the school. During this time, the school conducts a baseline assessment of the pupil's abilities and attitudes to learning. This consists of a summary of needs taken from education healthcare plans (EHCPs), statements of special educational needs, and existing school and educational psychology reports. Where appropriate, the school assesses pupils' literacy and numeracy skills using tests that result in useful standardised scores for each skill area. A thorough assessment of pupils' attitudes towards learning provides staff with valuable information about pupils' wider social and emotional needs.

Staff use the outcomes of these baseline assessments well to set meaningful targets and goals in person centred plans and when planning lessons.

Recommendation 2: Establish a consistent tracking system to monitor small and significant steps in progress throughout the pupils' time at school

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has purchased a management information system to record and track pupil progress. Staff collect a wide range of valuable assessment information to track pupil progress. This includes progress towards achieving targets in EHCPs, aspects of wellbeing, literacy, numeracy and where appropriate National Curriculum levels.

Senior leaders have received training in the management and implementation of the tracking system. The school has suitable plans in place for the system to be operational across all subjects from July 2018.

Recommendation 3: Make sure that feedback is effective and indicates areas for improvement

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has implemented new procedures and guidance for staff on assessment including a new approach to providing feedback to pupils. Teachers have trialled this new approach successfully in a few areas of the curriculum, such as personal and social education and history. The school has suitable plans to extend this approach across all areas of the curriculum.

Staff provide pupils with a high level of feedback on their progress during lessons, and at individual mentoring sessions. As a result, most pupils know their strengths, areas for development and targets for improvement well.

Recommendation 4: Continue to develop ways of engaging stakeholders in self-evaluation

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school has strengthened the arrangements for gathering the views of a wide range of important stakeholders. For example, senior leaders now gather the views of parents, staff, pupils and local residents using regular questionnaires. Strategic partners, such as planning officers and Careers Wales, provide their views using an online survey. Senior leaders have started to use this information to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

The school has implemented new arrangements to gather parents' views and share important messages about pupil progress. For example, two members of staff make home visits as part of their role as family liaison officers to gather the views of parents who have difficulty attending annual review meetings. Mentors communicate regularly with parents to celebrate pupil success.

Pupils make effective use of the mentoring programme to provide their point of view on aspects of the school's work and reflect on their own progress. An active school council meets monthly. Pupils elect members of the school council and contribute their views appropriately.

Recommendation 5: Submit a material change request to the Welsh Government for the use of the second site

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school has made the required material change request to Welsh Government.

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 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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 3.

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 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	Bettws Lifehouse
School number	6666048
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	02/05/2018
Proprietor	Meg Jones, Kay Jones & Adrian Jones
Staff	1 headteacher, 5 full-time teachers, 7 part-time teachers, 3 full-time and 3 part-time instructors, 5 full-time and 2 part-time learning support workers, 1 part-time administrative worker, 2 part-time auxiliary workers
Number of pupils	28
Provision	Day
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school	Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and moderate learning difficulties.
Last Section 163 inspection	07/05/2012
Last annual monitoring inspection	03/07/2017
Last CSSIW inspection	Insert text