



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

A report on

**Bridge Achievement Centre
Stephenson Street
Newport
NP19 0RB**

Date of inspection: March 2018

by

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

About Bridge Achievement Centre

The Bridge Achievement Centre is a portfolio pupil referral unit (PRU) and was established in April 2014 following a restructure of the Cylchdroi PRU. The PRU serves pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the foundation phase and at key stages 2, 3 and 4. The PRU operates four separate sites across Newport. These include a key stage 3 and Year 10 centre in Stephenson Street, a key stage 4 provision in Pillgwenlly and a key stage 2 centre at The Gôl Centre, Lliswerry, as well as a nurture group provision for secondary school age children in Rogerstone. The PRU also provides education for pupils who require home tuition due to their medical needs and manages the education other than at school placements in the local college and other education providers.

The Centre has increased in capacity by over 20% during the past three years, with the present school roll being 100. Of these, 54% are eligible for free school meals and this proportion is well above national averages. The majority of pupils come from homes where English is the predominant language and 11% of the learners are looked after by their local authority. All pupils have been identified as having additional learning needs and 30% have a statement of special educational needs.

Summary

Pupils on roll at the Bridge Achievement Centre have a wide range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and many have difficulty managing their behaviour in a mainstream setting. Teachers and support assistants across all provisions foster positive relationships with their pupils and, overall, pupils respond well to staff and establish a strong sense of trust.

Due to limited opportunities, pupils across the centre do not make enough progress in literacy and numeracy during their time at the PRU and make limited progress in information technology and communication (ICT), Welsh language and in their wider social and communication skills.

The quality of teaching across the centre is too variable. Leaders and teachers do not plan carefully enough to allow their pupils to progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills during their time at the PRU.

The PRU has recently developed a generally suitable tracking system to monitor pupil progress. However, in its current format, it does not support leaders and teachers to identify weaknesses accurately enough in order to tackle pupil underachievement. Safeguarding procedures do not meet requirements and are a serious cause for concern.

There is a lack of strategic vision among leaders and stakeholders. Procedures for quality assurance and improvement are not robust enough to allow the PRU to improve. The suitability and quality of the learning resources across the PRU vary too much.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate and needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement
Leadership and management	Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

Recommendations

- R1 Improve leadership to ensure that there is a strong, strategic vision for the PRU
- R2 Improve procedures for quality assurance and improvement planning to focus on pupil progress and the standards they achieve
- R3 Address the shortcomings in safeguarding procedures identified during the core inspection
- R4 Reduce the variability in the quality of teaching across the PRU and strengthen the planning and provision for skills
- R5 Enhance the curriculum and the learning opportunities at key stage 4 to enable pupils to follow their desired learning pathways
- R6 Improve punctuality and attendance and strengthen the procedures to monitor attendance across the PRU

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this PRU. The PRU will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the PRU's progress on a termly basis.

Main findings

Standards: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

Across the centre, the majority of pupils have a sound recall of previous learning and they apply their knowledge and understanding suitably in new settings.

The majority of pupils listen suitably to their teachers and support staff. Generally, they also listen well to the opinions of their peers. When questioned, the majority of pupils across the centre respond appropriately in short sentences, using suitable subject-specific vocabulary. However, generally, older pupils do not extend their ideas well enough and often provide oral responses that are too brief or superficial. A few older pupils are reluctant to engage in class discussions and do not make enough progress in speaking skills.

Many pupils across the centre make sound progress in developing their reading skills. In lessons, these pupils gather information from basic but suitable sources and use this information appropriately to come to conclusions and make judgments. For example, in English, pupils in key stage 3 skim and scan the text to identify key events successfully in the novel 'War Horse' by Michael Morpurgo. They also apply suitable reading skills in other subjects. For example, in science, they read about the processes involved in a water treatment cycle, locate facts successfully and make simple deductions. Older pupils gather the main points from a wide range of relevant texts and synthesise the information appropriately to form their judgment. When given the opportunity, a minority of pupils read aloud short passages clearly and with meaning.

Overall, a minority of pupils across the centre make sound progress in writing skills. Many younger pupils' presentation and handwriting improve over time and they develop pride in their work when they write independently. A majority of older pupils write appropriately in a narrow range of genres, such as diary entries and newspaper reports. They structure their sentences suitably. However, they do not have a firm understanding of how to arrange their work in paragraphs. The majority of pupils across the centre do not have a strong enough grasp of basic spelling, punctuation and grammar rules and make the same errors repeatedly.

The majority of pupils have a basic level of competence in the four rules of number. For example, they use their knowledge successfully to calculate simple additions, estimate and round up numbers and show a sound understanding of basic multiplication to calculate area and circumference. A few older pupils are confident when analysing basic data and draw reasonable conclusions from information in line graphs, bar graphs and pie charts. However, generally, many pupils do not make as much progress as they could in numeracy during their time at the centre. This is because there are limited opportunities to practise and increase their skills. Overall, pupils do not use their skills often enough in everyday, real life situations, nor do they apply their knowledge often enough in other subjects across the curriculum.

Many pupils make limited progress in ICT during their time at the centre.

Across the centre, nearly all pupils make limited progress in Welsh language development.

Many younger pupils develop valuable creative skills when they write poetry on subjects that interest them, such as cars and football. They also develop worthwhile independence skills when they use reference books to look up and choose relevant words in their work.

A very few older pupils develop beneficial thinking skills when they design and create furniture in design technology lessons. For example, they consider design, scale and materials purposefully when making coffee tables and wooden trays. However, due to limited opportunities across the centre, the majority of pupils do not make enough progress in thinking and problem-solving skills.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve at the PRU with national averages or to analyse the performance trends of groups over time because of the nature of the pupils' behavioural, social and emotional needs.

Most key stage 2 pupils who attend the short-term provision make a successful return to school. Most pupils who attend the nurture provision make suitable progress in their engagement with education. However, there is a declining trend in the number and standards of qualifications that pupils achieve at key stage 4. Since 2015, a few learners achieve suitable qualifications in English, mathematics and vocational subjects.

The number of pupils who do not move on to further education, training or employment at the end of key stage 4 has not reduced over time and is too high.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

The majority of pupils at the Bridge Achievement Centre display a generally positive attitude to education and learning.

Nearly all of the younger pupils and those at the nurture provision respond well to the caring approach and high level of support they receive. Over time, this helps them to gain in confidence, improve their attendance and develop the skills they need to manage their behaviour.

Many pupils feel safe and free from physical and verbal abuse at the centre and they demonstrate respect for one another. In a very few cases, pupils show a good level of maturity and are considerate of the needs others. For example, pupils in key stage 2 support new pupils sensitively when they join the class.

Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning vary significantly across the centre. While many younger pupils attend well, engage constructively with their teachers and concentrate well in lessons, a minority of older pupils do not. These pupils do not focus well enough in their lessons, lose interest in their work and are not interested enough in making progress.

Attendance rates vary too much across the provisions within the centre. Too many pupils in key stages 3 and 4 are late to lessons or leave lessons early. The poor behaviour of a minority of pupils across key stages 3 and 4 is a cause for concern.

There are limited opportunities for most pupils to contribute in a meaningful way to the life of the centre, to influence what and how they learn and to be involved in the local and wider community. As a result, pupils' development as leaders and as responsible, informed and active citizens is underdeveloped.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Overall, the quality of teaching at the Bridge Achievement Centre is adequate and needs improvement.

In most cases, teachers foster valuable and constructive relationships with their pupils. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and support them suitably with their wide-ranging social and emotional needs.

Many teachers are effective communicators and they model good language and behaviour to their pupils. In the majority of cases across the centre, staff display a strong commitment to managing behaviour.

In around half of lessons, teachers plan suitably to capture pupils' interest and engage them in learning. For example, teachers set engaging and stimulating literacy and numeracy tasks that provide suitable challenge for pupils of varying ability and need. As a result, pupils in these lessons make sound progress in their learning and skills. However, in a significant minority of lessons, teachers do not plan tasks and activities carefully enough in order to gain the engagement and focus of their pupils. In these lessons, tasks are unsuitable for the range of ability and age of the pupils and do not provide an increasing level of challenge. In a minority of lessons, tasks go on for too long and this results in poor pupil engagement and progress. In a few cases, teachers present topics that are irrelevant or unsuitable for the subject or are too complex for pupils.

Many teachers employ suitable questioning techniques on a whole class level. A minority of teachers question individual pupils effectively to probe and assess their understanding. Across the centre, most teachers mark pupils' work carefully and provide useful feedback on how pupils can improve their work.

The centre provides a relevant and appropriate curriculum for the majority of pupils. Most pupils at key stage 2 and key stage 3 are able to study a broad range of subjects including science, design technology, ICT, art and food technology. However, in key stage 4, pupils have access to a narrow range of subjects and qualifications and often these do not meet their aspirations or needs. The current structure at the centre means that pupils have limited choice at the end of Year 10 and, as a result, many are unable to continue with their preferred studies in Year 11.

Overall, teachers plan flexible learning programmes to meet the changing needs of pupils. Teachers at the key stage 2 and nurture provisions make effective use of outside space to provide worthwhile learning experiences for the pupils.

Subject leaders have made effective use of relevant training to plan for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy. In around half of lessons, teachers create suitable activities and set appropriate tasks to develop these skills. However, the provision for the development of skills across the PRU is still at an early stage and it is too early to see the impact of this on pupils' standards.

The centre has very recently identified suitable programmes to support pupils with weak literacy and numeracy. However, these intervention programmes are at a very early stage of development and have had limited impact on pupils' standards.

The provision for the Welsh language and Welsh culture is undeveloped. There are currently no opportunities for pupils from Welsh-medium schools to continue their learning through the medium of Welsh or for these pupils to take Welsh language qualifications.

The provision for the development of pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum is limited. Although there are well-considered plans to address this, there are few opportunities for pupils to use ICT equipment in their work.

Care, support and guidance: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

The centre has established a suitable system to track and monitor pupil progress across the curriculum at all sites. Staff use the system to record a useful range of information including national curriculum levels, pupils' reading and spelling ages and their individual rates of attendance. Staff also track trends in pupils' behaviour. However, staff do not use this information well enough to set individual pupil and subject improvement targets, nor to plan for suitable provision to address pupils' literacy needs.

The centre provides individual development plans (IDP) for pupils with additional learning needs. However, in many cases the information they contain is not detailed enough. Targets are too general and not measurable. As a result, this does not allow the centre to accurately identify pupil progress. The centre has recently introduced a person centred planning (PCP) approach to replace the IDPs. However, these are at a very early stage of development.

The centre's behaviour management policy is ineffective at key stages 3 and 4 and is not applied consistently by all staff. In its current format, the daily system for rewarding pupils for appropriate behaviour is not effective in ensuring that many of these pupils maintain good attitudes to learning and behaviour over time.

Senior leaders routinely collect exclusion data and report this to the management committee. The centre has recently introduced a well-considered system of internal exclusions to improve pupil engagement. However, managers have not evaluated the impact of this system on pupil behaviour well enough and fixed-term exclusion rates have remained high since 2015.

Leaders have established effective links with specialist agencies to support pupil wellbeing. For example, a dedicated education welfare officer is working with the provision to improve pupil engagement and attendance. Although pupils at the

Stephenson Street site have access to a school-based counsellor, pupils at the other sites do not.

The recently formed and well-considered multi-agency team, 'Team Around the BAC', meets to plan and co-ordinate targeted interventions to support pupil wellbeing. However, it is too early to measure the impact of this work on pupil engagement and attitudes to learning.

The planning for promoting pupils' personal, social and emotional development lacks a clear focus on relevant themes across the different key stages. Lessons for older pupils include a narrow range of suitable themes, such as substance misuse, healthy relationships and keeping safe, which meet their needs appropriately. However, the provision across the PRU is too variable.

The centre works productively with external agencies such as the police and Welsh Women's Aid to provide important knowledge, worthwhile learning experiences and useful skills for its pupils.

The PRU's arrangements for safeguarding do not meet requirements and are a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

Over the last two years, the number of pupils on roll, the range of pupils' additional learning needs and the number of provisions that make up the portfolio PRU have increased significantly. As a result, the identity, purpose and ethos of the centre have changed and there is a lack of shared vision among major stakeholders for the strategic direction.

The management committee has representation from a narrow range of suitable stakeholders. The committee has recently adopted a new structure of sub-committees and has allocated roles to each committee member. These changes are starting to help members gain a better understanding of the work of the PRU. However, reports to the management committee from the service manager do not contain enough detail on pupil outcomes and the quality of provision. As a result, members are not as aware as they should be of the PRU's strengths and areas for development and their role as a critical friend is underdeveloped. The management committee does not have a secure understanding of the costs incurred by the centre and the income available through grant funding.

The PRU has a calendar of quality assurance activities that draws on an appropriate range of first hand evidence on the quality of teaching at the PRU's main sites. This includes regular lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the scrutiny of teacher planning. However, senior leaders are too generous in their evaluation of teaching, as they do not consider well enough the impact it has on pupil outcomes. There is insufficient focus across all quality assurance activities on pupil progress and the standards they achieve.

The majority of staff have useful opportunities through regular meetings to contribute to self-evaluation. However, subject evaluations are inconsistent in quality and content. Generally, they do not provide an accurate account of the main strengths of each subject area and do not identify the most important targets for improvement.

The centre self-evaluation report does not provide an accurate account of its work. The report is based on a narrow range of evidence drawn from only a very few of the PRU's sites. It does not capture the views of major stakeholders such as parents and pupils well enough. The report does not identify important strengths clearly enough, such as the strong progress that pupils make at other centres.

Senior leaders meet on a regular basis. The meetings mainly focus on operational issues and do not regularly address progress in meeting priorities for improvement and the strategic direction of the centre.

Priorities in the development plan relate appropriately to the results of self-evaluation. However, the plan does not contain important strategic targets identified through monitoring by the local authority. The plan does not identify in enough detail the timescales, resources and actions that are needed to bring about the intended changes.

There are robust arrangements in place for the performance management of teachers employed directly by the PRU. Teachers benefit from regular supervision meetings with senior leaders that result in detailed action plans and targets that relate well to personal goals and priorities in the PRU development plan. As a result, staff have a clear understanding of their contribution to improvements across the centre.

Senior leaders have developed strong strategic partnerships with schools in the local area. These links support the reintroduction of most key stage 2 pupils back into mainstream education. The PRU makes an effective contribution to the local managed moves panel, which has helped to reduce the exclusion of pupils who have difficulty managing their behaviour in mainstream settings.

The PRU has started to build effective partnerships with similar providers to improve important aspects of its provision such as the policy and procedures for behaviour management. However, opportunities for staff to visit other settings and learn from effective practice are underdeveloped.

The PRU manager has been instrumental in creating a valuable forum that brings together members of key agencies who support pupil wellbeing through the newly-formed 'Team Around the BAC'. However, it is too early to assess the impact of this group on pupil outcomes.

The main site at Stephenson Street provides high quality resources and well-equipped classrooms that support the delivery of a broad range of learning experiences. However, the quality of learning resources varies too widely between sites. A lack of space and suitable resources at other PRU sites reduces the breadth of the curriculum and the range of teaching approaches used by staff.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the PRU and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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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