



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

A report on

Landsker Education

Date of inspection: February 2019

by

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

About Landsker Education

Landsker Education is registered as an independent school to provide in-house education for children resident in the company's children's homes who are not able to access mainstream education. The school is owned by Landsker Child Care, which aims to offer integrated education and residential care services to children with a range of needs, including social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder.

The school is registered for up to 30 pupils aged between 8 to 18 years, and provides full-time education at each of the company's eight children's homes. Three of these homes are in rural Pembrokeshire, two are in the Neath Port Talbot area, two are in Bridgend and one is in the Vale of Glamorgan

At the time of this inspection, there were 21 pupils on the school roll, aged between 12 and 16 years. All of the pupils are looked after by the local authority and reside in the company's children's homes. Many of the children are placed by local authorities in Wales; a few are placed by local authorities in England. Just over half of pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan (EHCP). No pupils are from Welsh-speaking backgrounds. No pupils speak English as an additional language.

The headteacher has been in post since 2009. The school was last inspected in November 2012.

Summary

Pupils attending Landsker Education make very strong progress in their learning during their time at the school. Due to the close collaboration between education, residential and therapeutic staff, pupils make exceptional progress in improving their attitudes to learning and developing their perceptions of themselves as successful learners. Nearly all pupils attend school regularly and talk with pride about their achievements and aspirations.

The quality of teaching at the school is very high. Teachers work together closely to provide a structured environment for learning that encourages pupils to build confidence and take calculated risks. The curriculum has a strong emphasis on improving pupils' core literacy and numeracy skills and provides a secure foundation for future learning and the achievement of relevant qualifications.

The arrangements for promoting the wider skills development of its pupils are a notable strength of the school. Well-planned therapeutic interventions and the provision for the development of pupils' independent living skills help to prepare them very well for successful transitions to further education, employment and independent living.

The headteacher and directors of the school provide highly effective leadership that promotes the close collaboration of education and residential staff very successfully.

The school meets all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Excellent
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Excellent
Leadership and management	Good

Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The provision of information

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that curriculum planning identifies clearly what pupils learn as they move through the school

R2 Strengthen the quality of improvement planning

What happens next

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what actions the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents/carers at the school.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare case studies on its work in relation to its highly effective teaching, and the well co-ordinated planning for the development of pupils' wider skills, for dissemination on Estyn's website

Main findings

Standards: Excellent

Most pupils attending Landsker Education respond extremely well to the school's positive ethos and the skilled support of teachers and support staff. As a result, they make strong and sustained progress in learning in relation to their individual starting points and abilities.

Most pupils improve their literacy skills very successfully during their time at the school. In particular, they develop strong communication and oracy skills. They listen closely to their peers and adults and ask insightful questions, considering others' responses carefully. Many pupils answer questions confidently and use subject specific language accurately, such as when describing the characteristics of the planets in the solar system. Less confident pupils respond positively to teachers' skilful questioning and extend their answers effectively, justifying their opinions with appropriate reference to source materials.

Most pupils learn to read with increasing independence and confidence from widely varying starting points, and many pupils make substantial improvements in their reading ages. They skim and scan texts to identify meaning and information, and use these skills well, for example in science lessons to locate and draw out precise details. The majority of pupils use an effective range of strategies to assist them with spelling capably. For example, they apply their knowledge of phonics successfully to spell complex words accurately.

Many pupils make strong progress in the development of their writing skills. Generally, pupils across the school take suitable pride in their written work, organise their ideas successfully and present their work neatly. They express themselves with sensitivity and with an appropriate understanding of audience and purpose. They show empathy and cultural understanding, for example when writing a letter from a soldier describing his experiences at the front during the First World War, or when comparing the stylistic features of R S Thomas' poems.

Most pupils develop their numeracy skills effectively. They consolidate their understanding of the four rules of number to establish important foundations for learning. Pupils apply these skills successfully to solve algebraic equations, reinforce times tables and measure the volume of three dimensional shapes such as cuboids. The majority of pupils apply this understanding confidently across the curriculum, for example when interpreting graphs and data sets in science to answer questions about biodiversity.

Most pupils make strong progress in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) skills to support their learning. They work individually and with others to research information about topics such as the use of rationing in the Second World War, or global inequality and the role of multi-national companies. They use a range of software programs to create striking poster designs and graphics, for example, when creating a collage of images about a local artist. Many pupils produce lively presentations to communicate their learning to others. They use online applications and websites creatively to design interactive games to enhance their learning.

Most pupils develop their thinking skills with increasing confidence during their time at the school. In science, they make informed hypotheses and predictions when planning an investigation. They apply their thinking skills to real-life problems effectively, such as when budgeting for spending money, calculating change or calculating how much paint is required to decorate a classroom. Older pupils develop the skills they need for future life very well. For example, they complete worthwhile periods of work experience in the local community with a range of employers such as a hair salon or stables.

Nearly all leavers over the last three years have obtained a broad range of appropriate qualifications and accredited courses at GCSE and entry level. They move onto suitable destinations including further education courses in areas such as car mechanics or health and beauty. A minority of pupils make successful transitions into employment in the leisure or catering sector, apprenticeships or supported living.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards pupils achieve at the school with national averages or to analyse trends in performance over time because of the wide range of pupils' emotional and special educational needs. There is no significant difference between the performance of all pupils and those with a statement of SEN or an EHCP, or between the performance of boys and girls.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Due to the close co-operation between education and residential staff, most pupils improve their wellbeing significantly and make very strong progress in developing their self-esteem as learners during their time at the school. In particular, pupils' positive attitudes to learning and the pride they take in their progress and achievements are notable strengths of the school.

Most pupils build high levels of trust in their teachers and respond constructively to the guidance and feedback they provide. These productive relationships help them to feel safe and to become more confident in their own abilities. They cope effectively with increasing levels of challenge as they move through the school, for example when preparing for and taking GCSEs in English and mathematics. As a result, by the time they leave the school they are successful learners, well prepared for further education and employment.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Attendance for all pupils' shows considerable improvement compared to their attendance prior to joining the school. Overall, attendance is exceptionally high in comparison with levels in similar schools.

Most pupils arrive punctually for lessons. They understand and follow school routines well and settle promptly to tasks at the start of each session. In most lessons, they sustain their concentration well and show interest and enthusiasm in their work, for example, when designing and making a pet from clay. They persevere well with complex tasks and bring these successfully to completion, such as when constructing an advent calendar out of wood in technology lessons.

Nearly all pupils succeed in developing the skills and understanding to manage their own behaviour more successfully. Most pupils demonstrate exemplary standards of behaviour in the classroom and around the school. They show maturity and

consideration for others around them, for example, by taking responsibility for clearing up after themselves after lunch. They interact respectfully with staff and visitors to the school, and relate constructively to their peers during lessons.

Nearly all pupils contribute effectively to evaluating their own progress in lessons and over time. For example, they work with their teachers well to set their personal targets on their individual education plans and evaluate their own progress against these each day. They respond enthusiastically to the school's rewards system, which helps them to maintain their behaviour and engagement through the day.

Nearly all pupils play a productive role in improving the work of the school. For example, they participate effectively in the work of the school council, offering constructive opinions on aspects of the school's provision. Recently, their engagement in this process has helped to shape decisions around the school uniform, reward system and timetable.

Most pupils develop a secure understanding of a healthy lifestyle, both through the curriculum provided in the school and the extended provision provided in the children's homes. Due to well-planned specialist interventions, all pupils improve their understanding of how to keep themselves safe and build successful relationships. They understand the benefits of a healthy diet and many participate regularly in physical exercise, for example, attending the local gym, skate-park or swimming.

Many pupils improve their understanding of others less fortunate than themselves. They develop their understanding of society through raising money for charity for worthwhile causes, such as a cancer charity, the homeless and a dog's rescue centre. A few contribute positively to community projects by taking part in litter picks and beach cleans, for example.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching at the school is a notable strength of the school's provision. Teachers across the school's eight sites work together closely and share a consistent approach, which provides pupils with a safe and stable learning environment. Over time, this highly effective teamwork fosters a productive working ethos which enables pupils to make very strong progress in their learning.

Nearly all teachers have high expectations of pupils' standards of behaviour and achievements. They set challenging learning objectives and share clear success criteria with pupils. This shared approach helps pupils understand the level of work expected of them and enables them to respond appropriately.

Nearly all teachers plan well-structured lessons that follow a consistent routine. This helps pupils to settle quickly to tasks and maximises the use of learning time. Teachers know their pupils well and design purposeful learning experiences that engage pupils and stimulate their interest effectively. Activities are well-paced, build successfully on previous learning and are matched closely to pupils' abilities.

Teachers provide exceptionally good instruction and explanations when introducing new topics. They are particularly good language role models and extend pupils' vocabulary successfully. They develop and use appropriately challenging terminology consistently. As a result, pupils become increasingly confident in using subject specific terms accurately.

In lessons, residential staff work effectively with teachers to provide strong classroom support for pupils in ways that promote pupils' independence successfully. They work alongside pupils to complete tasks, modelling the skills required and encouraging pupils suitably to find their own solutions to problems.

Teachers and residential staff supporting pupils in lessons provide them with supportive verbal feedback. They offer thoughtful and specific praise, which develops pupils' confidence and helps them to remain on task. Teachers use questioning skilfully to ensure that pupils understand the task and feel confident with the activity. This approach encourages pupils to think about what they like about their work and how they can improve. However, the quality of teachers' written feedback is inconsistent and does not always identify clearly what pupils need to do to improve their work.

The school provides a broad curriculum that meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. Curriculum planning places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy, and thinking skills. This focus provides many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to consolidate and apply these skills effectively in all aspects of their learning, for example when recording data and analysing findings in science lessons. Teachers' lesson planning includes clear learning objectives that build suitably on pupils' prior learning in these areas. Pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) include relevant targets to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers use IEPs well to supplement schemes of work and consolidate pupils' understanding of key concepts in these areas.

Teachers and residential staff work together effectively to support the development of important independence skills in areas such as medical services and food preparation. The school has a strong focus on enabling all pupils to achieve relevant qualifications at entry level or level 1. This co-ordinated and personalised approach prepares pupils very well for successful transitions to further education and employment, and supported and independent living. However, the planning for the progressive development of pupils' creative and physical skills is underdeveloped. In addition, at key stage 3 in particular, teachers' long-term planning does not provide a clear overview of pupils' learning across the curriculum.

The curriculum provides a suitable range of valuable learning experiences in the community that enrich and extend the curriculum. For example, they visit places of worship to support their work in religious education, and the cenotaph and museums to support their work in history. A few older pupils benefit from links to local training providers and employers that provide valuable experience of the world of work and further enhance the curriculum offer at the school.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school has highly effective arrangements to promote the progress and wellbeing of its pupils. Staff across the education and residential settings share high expectations of pupils' behaviour and engagement in learning and work together closely to provide a calm and purposeful learning environment. Nearly all pupils respond very positively to this highly consistent and structured approach. As a result, they maintain their placements at the school and make very beneficial progress in their learning and wellbeing.

The school has robust processes to assess pupils' starting points in literacy and numeracy when they join the school. This information helps teachers to plan purposefully to meet pupils' individual needs in these key skills and to provide appropriate support for learning. Teachers monitor pupils' progress in these skills regularly, as well as against national curriculum levels and, for older pupils, against relevant accreditation criteria.

Teachers use the outcomes of these assessments effectively to inform the targets on pupils' education and behaviour management plans. They track pupils' progress against these targets on a day-to-day basis, and review this regularly with pupils. This productive dialogue between teachers and pupils enables pupils to see very clearly the improvements they have made and understand what they need to do next. Over time, this process helps to consolidate their confidence, resilience and perception of themselves as successful learners.

Teachers work constructively with residential staff to provide a well-co-ordinated approach to promoting and monitoring pupils' emotional and social wellbeing. All pupils have targets for attendance, effort and behaviour that help pupils develop a clear understanding of what they need to succeed in their learning. The school's reward system, designed by the pupils, rewards their progress against these targets and helps to reinforce these positive behaviours.

The school places a strong emphasis on equipping pupils with the understanding and skills they need to make healthy lifestyle choices to support their future wellbeing. It makes highly effective use of an online assessment tool to assess pupils' starting points with regard to the social and emotional difficulties they face. Leaders and managers from the education and residential settings meet regularly with the school's therapeutic specialist. They plan valuable strategies to address issues of concern identified by the assessment tool. These strategies address relevant topics such as building successful relationships and anger management, as well as the skills pupils will need to live independently in the future, such as budgeting and travel.

This well-planned approach is highly successful in ensuring all staff across the school have a strong understanding of pupils' wider needs. The close working between education and residential staff, guided by the school's therapeutic specialist, helps to equip pupils with important skills that are well matched to their specific needs and requirements.

The school's programme of personal, social and health education complements this provision suitably. Pupils cover a range of important subjects, such as healthy lifestyles, online safety, and emotional wellbeing. These topics provide valuable support for pupils to reflect on aspects of their own development and behaviour, and help pupils to develop a secure sense of what is right and wrong.

The school provides valuable opportunities for older pupils to develop their understanding of the world of work through regular careers advice, learning about employability skills and beneficial work experience placements. This provision prepares pupils effectively to make informed choices about what they want to do when they leave school.

The school makes strong provision for pupils to contribute to decision-making processes and influence the work of the school. They participate actively in shaping aspects of the school's work, for example in providing feedback to senior leaders on the rewards system and school uniform. Teachers provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to influence what and how they learn, which helps pupils maintain their engagement and motivation.

The school has effective arrangements to communicate with parents and carers and local authorities. Monthly reports provide a comprehensive picture of pupils' progress against their wider targets, while termly and annual reports clearly identify pupils' progress against their education targets and identify their next steps in learning.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

Senior leaders communicate a clear strategic vision for the school that focuses well on the important role that education plays in building pupils' self-confidence and developing the skills to make successful transitions to further education, employment and independent living. Staff at all levels support this vision well and work together effectively to meet pupils' social, emotional and learning needs. As a result, the vision permeates all aspects of the work of the school.

Leaders have created a highly effective ethos of collaborative working across the staff team. As a consequence, there is very strong teamwork between the education team and residential staff that has a highly beneficial impact on pupils' standards and wellbeing. For example, teachers share the results of literacy and numeracy assessments with the residential staff, which helps them to provide effective support for pupils to practise these skills in the residential setting. This shared responsibility across the staff team for supporting pupil learning and wellbeing is a strong feature of the school's provision.

The proprietors provide a high level of challenge and support for the headteacher. They are frequent visitors to each of the school's sites and know the school's strengths and areas for development well. The proprietors have well-defined roles within the school's quality assurance procedures and carry out line management responsibility for important aspects of the school's provision diligently. The headteacher provides strong leadership for the education team and liaises well with managers at each of the residential settings to ensure that the provision meets pupils' identified learning needs.

Leaders have established robust systems to evaluate regularly the quality of the provision made at each site. These draw appropriately on first-hand evidence such as lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work. The school collects and responds well to the views of major stakeholders including staff, pupils and local authority placing officers.

The procedures for school improvement planning take good account of national initiatives to ensure these align well with priorities that reflect the school's own aims

and ethos. For example, leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum and set appropriate targets to improve the provision for both ICT and independent living skills. The school allocates suitable resources to support these school improvement priorities. However, leaders have identified too many areas for improvement that require action within too short a timeframe and have not identified clearly which of these are a priority for the school to address.

Leaders provide a high level of support for the professional development of staff. For example, the headteacher meets with each teacher every half-term to discuss their performance, provide feedback on the quality of teaching and agree targets for development. There are many worthwhile opportunities for staff to meet and share good practice.

The staff team have a broad range of subject specialisms and skills that provide effective support for the curriculum and pupils' identified needs. Staff know and understand their roles and responsibilities well. They value highly the opportunities they have to develop management skills by taking on leadership roles such as for the co-ordination of subjects or important aspects of pupil wellbeing.

Staff benefit highly from planned opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in important aspects of pupil wellbeing such as supporting pupils' emotional needs, behaviour management and bullying.

Leaders resource the school well. Classrooms at each site provide welcoming, well-equipped learning environments that support the delivery of the curriculum and meet pupils' needs successfully.

The school has a proven track record in addressing recommendations from previous Estyn monitoring visits and in securing improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.

The school meets all of the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Copies of the report

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

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

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

Excellent	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 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:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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