



Annual monitoring inspection report on

Headlands School

Date of inspection: February 2015

by

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

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Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court

Keen Road

Cardiff

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

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Context

Headlands School is an independent special school, situated in a residential area of Penarth in the Vale of Glamorgan. It is part of the Action for Children charity. The school provides day and term time residential placements for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school currently educates 62 pupils from key stage 2 to post-16.

Pupils come from Welsh authorities mainly, with a few pupils from English authorities. Eighteen pupils have term time residential places. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) and 21 pupils have 'looked-after child' (LAC) status. Pupils have a range of additional learning needs, which include attention deficit hyperactivity disorders and autistic spectrum disorders.

Main findings

Strengths

The school's strengths are that:

- Leaders and managers provide clear strategic direction for the school
- Teachers and support staff help pupils to develop their thinking skills extremely well
- Over time, pupils improve their behaviour well
- Pupils develop important social skills, for example when welcoming visitors to the school
- Pupils carry out roles of responsibility through the school council and the peer mentoring scheme
- The school has effective relationships with the local authority and consortium, which provide appropriate training opportunities for staff
- Overall, the school accommodation provides an effective learning environment

Areas for development

The school's areas for development are that:

- The use of adult support in the classroom does not always allow pupils to develop their independence
- The learning environment for key stage 2 pupils is not to the standard of the rest of the school

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Ensure that adult support in the classroom promotes pupils' independence skills
- R2 Improve the learning environment at key stage 2

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

Recommendation 1: Further develop a coherent anti-bullying strategy to address the perceptions of a minority of pupils that staff do not always intervene quickly enough when behaviour is likely to escalate into bullying

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has taken effective action to raise the awareness of staff and pupils in relation to bullying.

Since the last visit, the anti-bullying policy has been updated to reflect new procedures. Managers have shared and discussed the policy with all staff to ensure that there is a consistent approach throughout the school. Anti-bullying is now a standing agenda item on all staff training days.

The school has developed a bullying incident form. This allows managers to collect data and identify trends. However, the analysis of data is at an early stage.

The school has placed a clear focus on helping staff and pupils recognise early signs of behaviour that may lead to bullying, for example verbal exchanges on the football pitch. Posters across the school help pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is. As part of the personal and social education curriculum, university psychology students lead regular sessions on anti-bullying during tutorial times.

The school has appointed additional peer mentors and set up a drop-in room that is managed by the psychology students, staff and peer mentors. This gives pupils a valuable opportunity to discuss any concerns they have.

The school has set up an 'anti-bullying crew.' These pupils support the work of the school in raising awareness of bullying issues.

Recommendation 2: Identify excellent teaching at Headlands, and in other schools, and share this practice with staff

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Managers have established effective systems for staff to share good practice within the school. Through formal lesson observations, they identified examples of good

and excellent teaching, and invited staff to form a 'Good to Excellent' group. This group has carried out valuable work in identifying the characteristics of excellent teaching and sharing this knowledge with the rest of the staff.

The school has set up 'teaching triangles', which allow teachers to observe each other's lessons and gain a better understanding of good and excellent teaching, through discussing strengths and areas for development as a group. They share this information with the rest of the staff during training days.

The school has increased opportunities for staff to observe teaching outside the school. Teachers have carried out visits to local primary and secondary schools through the 'Outstanding Teacher Programme' as well as a visit to a pupil referral unit. These visits have helped staff at Headlands School improve their practice.

Recommendation 3: Make sure that older pupils are given detailed written feedback on what they need to do to improve their work

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has made appropriate progress against this recommendation. Examples of effective marking are seen across all key stages. Managers carry out regular book scrutiny to ensure consistency across the school.

Recommendation 4: Continue to strengthen the involvement of the governing body in the self-evaluation process

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The headteacher provides regular reports to the governing body, including the key messages from the self-evaluation report. These help governors understand the strengths and areas for development at the school. Governors select one priority a year from the school improvement plan, and use this as a focus for visits to the school. Following each visit they provide a written report to the senior leadership team.

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 the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 6.

Standard 7: The manner in which complaints are to be handled

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 7.

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	Headlands School
School number	6736025
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	04/02/2015
Proprietor	Action for Children
Staff	15 teachers, 25 teaching assistants, including 5 higher level teaching assistants
Number of pupils	62
Provision	Day and 38 week residential provision
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school	Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; autistic spectrum disorder
Last Section 163 inspection	22/10/2012
Last annual monitoring inspection	23/10/2013
Last CSSIW inspection	23/10/2014

Team information

Mrs Caroline Rees	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Michelle Gosney	Team Inspector