



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Ceredigion Pupil Referral Unit
Portland Place
Aberaeron
Ceredigion
SA46 0AX**

Date of inspection: December 2012

by

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



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

| Judgement | What the judgement means |
|-----------------------|---|
| Excellent | Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice |
| Good | Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement |
| Adequate | Strengths outweigh areas for improvement |
| Unsatisfactory | Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths |

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

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Context

Ceredigion Pupil Referral Unit is part of the provision that Ceredigion local authority makes for pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural needs.

Many pupils have additional learning needs and about 25% of them are looked-after children.

All pupils are on the additional learning needs register and about 20% have a statement of special educational needs.

Following the Estyn inspection of Ceredigion Pupil Referral Unit in 2006, the unit's provision was restructured and remodelled in line with the recommendations of the inspection, along with the policies of the education authority, starting in 2010.

The current Ceredigion Pupil Referral Unit is registered with the Welsh Government as a 'portfolio' pupil referral unit. The unit is situated on three separate sites and one management board supervises it with an integrated line management structure.

Twenty-four pupils are on roll; five at Canolfan yr Eos (Aberystwyth); six at Canolfan Bro Steffan (Cribyn); and 13 at Canolfan Aeron (Aberaeron).

The unit aims to return all pupils to mainstream education and/or to further education, training or employment.

All pupils receive full-time provision, some of which is provided within the unit and the remainder by a mainstream school, college, training provider and/or a vocational provider.

About 45% have free school meals. About 80% of pupils come from homes where there is no Welsh-speaking parent/guardian and about 17% come from homes where one parent/guardian speaks Welsh. No pupils are learning English as an additional language.

The unit also offers a support service in the field for schools in the county on specific aspects of improving behaviour.

The teacher in charge of the unit has been in post since September 2010.

Ceredigion Pupil Referral Unit has not been inspected in the past in its current form.

Summary

| | |
|--|------------------|
| The PRU's current performance | Good |
| The PRU's prospects for improvement | Excellent |

Current performance

Ceredigion Pupil Referral Unit is good because:

- nearly all pupils make good progress which ensures that they receive recognised qualifications, or develop the necessary skills to move on to schools, further education, training or employment;
- pupils' behaviour and attendance are very good;
- the effect of strategic leadership ensures high standards;
- the standard of care, support and guidance is excellent;
- staff know how to meet pupils' specific needs; and
- the flexibility of the curriculum offers a wide range of activities for meeting pupils' needs.

Prospects for improvement

The unit has excellent prospects for improvement because:

- the management body and the teacher in charge offer clear leadership, which has ensured improvements over a short period of time;
- there is effective co-operation between the unit and the local authority and other partners;
- the culture of self-evaluation and ensuring improvement has led to significant improvements in pupils' standards and wellbeing; and
- the supportive atmosphere engenders confidence in learners and fosters the desire to learn.

Recommendations

- R1 Raise pupils' standards in their use of information and communication technology (ICT) across different activities
- R2 Continue to develop assessment for learning strategies
- R3 Increase opportunities for pupils to use Welsh within the unit
- R4 Ensure that there is a clear strategy for promoting skills

What happens next?

Ceredigion Pupil Referral Unit will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the unit to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice that has been seen during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Across the unit, nearly all pupils achieve good standards, considering their starting point when they began at the unit. They respond well to the targets of their individual learning plans. Nearly all pupils, in all key stages, make very good progress against their previous achievements and against specific success criteria.

It is not appropriate to compare standards of achievement in the unit with national averages or to analyse performance trends over time because of the wide range of special needs that the pupils at the unit have.

There is no significant difference between the achievements of different groups of pupils, including boys and girls, looked-after children and those who have free school meals.

Nearly all make good progress in their skills. Nearly all pupils show good and consistent progress over time in their reading skills. They understand what they are reading and can discuss the content confidently with others. The few lower ability pupils recognise letters and use them to create one syllable words, and read them fluently. Older pupils use their reading skills well to collect information from different sources and they can speak about events in books, showing a good understanding.

Younger pupils write simple sentences to express themselves, and they spell familiar words correctly. The oldest pupils answer questions in writing, clearly and concisely, and the most able pupils show very good progress in language and communication skills, and use a good range of vocabulary in a specific context. A minority of pupils are unsure about how to punctuate, such as placing full stops and knowing when to use capital letters in written tasks.

They nearly all listen attentively and respond enthusiastically; many concentrate continuously on their tasks and show perseverance.

Many pupils across the unit make effective use of formal Welsh lessons. However, many pupils do not choose to use the language often enough incidentally and or in informal situations.

Many pupils across the unit make effective use of numeracy skills across a range of subjects. They also make good use of numeracy skills in situations within the community, for example when handling money. However, a minority of pupils' skills when using ICT are undeveloped.

Pupils know their personal targets well but they do not always know how to measure their success against specific criteria at the end of a lesson. Many pupils have a good understanding of issues concerning sustainability. Many of them can make sensible decisions and co-operate effectively with others.

Nearly all pupils show good progress in thinking skills. However, many pupils' ability to work independently in lessons is inconsistent. Many of them rely too much on guidance from adults when following formal tasks, but their ability to follow informal, interactive activities independently is good.

Results of the Entry Level Certificate and the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) show that pupils in key stage 4 make good progress. Nearly all pupils move on to further education, training or employment. Those who are in key stages 2 and 3, and move to other schools, settle there well.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Most pupils feel safe and ready to ask for help when needed. They enjoy coming to the unit and are very keen to learn. The behaviour of almost all pupils is excellent, outside and inside the school. Their attitudes to participating in activities are very good and they have often developed and improved from a very low and challenging base.

Most pupils participate actively when setting rules of behaviour for the unit. They are active in setting and monitoring their own individual targets and make considerable progress towards meeting their individual targets in terms of behaviour and personal and social education.

The behaviour and desire to learn of those pupils who have rejoined mainstream schools are excellent and a significant strength.

Nearly all pupils have shown a significant increase in their attendance rates since joining the unit and this is an obvious strength.

They are very aware of the importance of attendance and the effect that it has on their development.

Most pupils are aware of healthy eating and take part in physical exercise activities regularly. Many of them play a supportive part in the life and activities of the local community; for example, by working together to improve the local environment and participating well in charitable events by raising money for specific causes.

Most pupils use excellent co-operation skills by supporting each other consistently in a variety of activities. They show respect for each other, to staff and towards visitors. Pupils are prepared to voice their opinion about what is happening at the unit and they are proud of this.

Nearly all pupils show high standards in using social skills within and outside the unit, respect others and behave in a courteous and friendly manner towards others. This is a strength.

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| Key Question 2: How good is provision? | Good |
|---|-------------|

Learning experiences: Good

The unit offers a very wide range of learning experiences in all key stages. All pupils have their own timetable, based on their needs and preferences.

In key stage 2, pupils follow lessons in mainstream classes, for example, literacy, cookery and first aid sessions. In key stage 3, where appropriate, the unit ensures that pupils are taught in mainstream schools as well as in the unit. The unit co-operates well with these schools to ensure progression and continuity.

In key stage 4, all pupils are able to follow a range of accredited academic and vocational courses. This includes Entry Level Certificate courses for all pupils, in addition to GCSE in Welsh, English and mathematics for the most able pupils.

There are very strong links with a range of partners which enable pupils to gain a variety of recognised qualifications in vocational fields, for example mechanics and carpentry. The provision also offers pathways to gaining qualifications that recognise attainments in personal and social skills, in addition to work-related education. The curriculum's flexibility to meeting pupils' individual needs is an obvious strength.

Pupils have good opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. However, planning for developing skills across the curriculum, including ICT skills, has not been developed fully.

Nearly all pupils have good opportunity to develop their thinking skills, but there are not as many opportunities to develop independent skills in formal lessons.

Although all pupils have an opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills, there are not enough opportunities for them to use the language incidentally and consistently. Provision for developing pupils' understanding of Welsh culture is good.

Provision for education for sustainable development and global citizenship is good.

Teaching: Good

Teaching in all key stages in the unit is good. Teachers plan lessons effectively in order to meet individual pupils' needs. It is ensured that pupils understand the purpose of lessons, in addition to their individual targets.

Teachers use a range of resources and teaching methods effectively and they divide their lessons into suitable and concise activities. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and make good progress. However, there is no consistency in the use of information technology and, at times, too many activities rely too heavily on worksheets. Teachers and assistants co-operate effectively to support pupils' behavioural and educational needs. All staff have a clear understanding of strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

The unit uses data effectively to monitor and review individual pupils' progress when planning lessons and appropriate activities. The data also enables staff to identify which pupils need additional support.

The unit has developed a clear assessment policy. Teachers offer good oral feedback to pupils and books are marked regularly. This enables pupils to know how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve. Although there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work, the range of assessment for learning strategies has not been embedded fully across all activities.

The unit offers very clear information to parents and carers which helps them to understand the progress that is being made by their children.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

Provision for care, support and guidance is very good. The unit has appropriate policies and procedures that promote health and wellbeing effectively. All staff focus very successfully on creating a safe, caring and respectful environment. These arrangements contribute significantly to pupils' development and wellbeing and give them valuable support.

The unit promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Morning assemblies give regular opportunities for pupils to reflect appropriately on their lives.

Very effective use is made of the support of a wide range of specialist multidisciplinary agencies. Pupils appreciate this support greatly and it has a very positive effect on their behaviour, their development and the increase in their attendance. Nearly all pupils say that support from staff has ensured that they have come to understand and appreciate the importance of improving attendance and punctuality. The wide range of strategies for care, guidance and support is a significant strength.

The comprehensive manual and regular meetings ensure that parents and carers receive relevant information about the unit and its work.

The unit knows its pupils' additional learning needs well and ensures that appropriate support is in place. Individual programmes help pupils to make good progress and to grow in confidence. Individual education plans are reviewed and adapted regularly in order to ensure that they set appropriate improvement targets.

The unit's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

There is an inclusive ethos within the unit, which shows obvious respect for staff and pupils and this is a strength. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place which promote this inclusive ethos effectively.

All pupils have equal opportunities to access the curriculum and all activities, and they are encouraged to appreciate equality and diversity in society.

The unit is on three sites, and all of them are accessible and suitable for pupils' learning purposes.

There is a suitable range of specific resources for pupils' learning needs in addition to appropriate displays that promote the school's rules and expectations.

Local leisure centres are used regularly to add well to physical education activities that are offered.

There are suitable toilets for staff and pupils and the centres are safe and kept clean.

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| Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? |
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|------------------|
| Excellent |
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Leadership: Excellent

The management committee has established and communicated a clear vision that is shared and implemented very well by the teacher in charge and staff. Together, they give a very clear direction and structure to the work of the unit. They have implemented comprehensive developments, in a comparatively short time, which focus specifically on meeting the learning and social needs of a wide range of pupils.

This structure and these developments are significant strengths that have ensured that most pupils show very good progress in standards and wellbeing, improve their attendance significantly, and reintegrate successfully into mainstream schools.

The management committee's knowledge of the unit is a strength. Members offer very effective challenge and support. The effect of this work can be seen in the obvious progress that pupils make in attendance and behaviour. Minutes of meetings are comprehensive and prioritise areas for improvement.

Performance management systems are linked successfully to the unit's development plan.

Staff understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities very well. Managers have high expectations and they communicate them to staff very effectively.

The unit's distributed leadership has a very beneficial effect on pupils' standards and staff development across the three sites.

The unit considers national priorities appropriately and ensures that there is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in addition to developing a very wide range of learning opportunities.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluation is an integral part of the unit's work and all members of staff contribute actively to the process. Leaders and managers have a very good understanding of the unit's strengths and areas that need to be developed further. The unit has used the information from its self-evaluation to set priorities and targets for improvement and this has led to improving standards of wellbeing and the care that is offered to pupils.

The self-evaluation report is comprehensive; priorities are clear and almost all of them are being implemented effectively within the centres. Good use is being made of the opinion of parents, carers and a wide range of stakeholders.

Staff use the performance data that is available regularly to monitor progress and plans for improvement. This has led to a consistent rise in pupils' standards of achievement.

A variety of stakeholders observe lessons effectively. Very good use is made of external agencies and the local authority to confirm and validate the unit's evaluations. As a result, there is a clear focus on raising standards across the unit.

Staff take part in a variety of networks of professional practice and this ensures that good practice is shared across the unit.

Partnership working: Excellent

Effective communication between the unit and parents and carers helps pupils to improve their standards and wellbeing.

Partnership activities contribute very strongly to expanding the range of choices for pupils in key stage 4. Leaders of the unit's centres play a prominent part in ensuring the quality of courses that are provided through the local authority. The excellent co-operation in partnership between the Behaviour Support Service, the unit, mainstream schools and other providers is excellent and has a very positive effect on pupils' outcomes, especially in terms of the continuity and progression of their work.

The teacher in charge has a very strong relationship with a wide range of partners across the local authority. She is a full member of Primary and Secondary Headteachers' Committees. This ensures that she is familiar with the latest educational developments that strengthen the unit's expertise. The unit has useful links with the community. There is a good example of Canolfan yr Eos pupils using independent skills in a local supermarket. There are visits to a police station, in addition to a cycling course centre, which contribute well to improving pupils' awareness of aspects of safety. Pupils at Canolfan Cribyn have also organised a coffee morning for their local neighbours.

The unit co-operates particularly well with local schools in order to integrate pupils back to into mainstream schools. All pupils in key stages 2 and 3 in the unit move to an appropriate school and stay there, and they continue to receive support from the unit's staff for a specific period. The close co-operation between the unit, schools and local authority services are central to this success.

The unit's staff co-operate with local schools to ensure that the level of attainment of pupils who are returning to the school is identified clearly.

Resource management: Good

The unit has a good range of staff who have a wide range of expertise in various areas and activities. Staff are used effectively to support pupils and to meet the curriculum's requirements.

The different sites have a good range of resources that meet pupils' needs on the whole. However, there is no consistency in the use of information technology equipment.

The unit has an appropriate policy and strategies for managing the performance of teachers and support staff. This ensures that staff and whole-unit development needs are identified and met successfully.

Expenditure is linked carefully to the priorities of the unit's development plan. The unit co-operates effectively with the local authority to manage and monitor expenditure.

Considering the positive effect that the strategic leadership within the unit has to ensure high standards in pupils' wellbeing, attendance and behaviour, the unit provides very good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Twelve responses to parents or carers' questionnaires were received.

All parents who responded agreed that staff treat all pupils fairly and with respect and that regular information is provided about their children's progress. They all feel comfortable in asking a question of the unit, making suggestions or identifying a problem and they are satisfied with the unit in general. They are of the opinion that the unit's system for dealing with complaints is easy to understand.

All parents felt that their child is making good progress and that staff expect their child to work hard and to do his/her best. They say that their child is safe at the unit, that their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any specific individual needs and that there is good variety of activities, including trips or visits. They feel that the unit is well run, that their child received support to settle in well when he/she started at the unit and that their child likes the unit. All parents who responded to the questionnaire believe that teaching is good, and that their child is encouraged to be healthy. They are of the opinion that the unit encourages them to take regular physical exercise and that the unit helps their child to be more mature and to shoulder responsibilities, and prepares them well for moving on to the next school, college, or to work.

Many parents felt that the unit prepares their child well for moving on to the next school, college, or to work.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Thirteen pupils completed the questionnaire.

All pupils say that they know to whom they should speak if they are worried or anxious and they know what to do and to whom to speak if they find the work difficult.

In addition, they all believe that the unit is a safe place for them and deals well with any bullying.

All pupils who responded to the questionnaire are of the opinion that the unit teaches them how to keep healthy and offers many opportunities to take regular physical exercise.

In addition, they all believe that teachers and other adults help them to learn and to make progress, that they have enough books, equipment and computers to enable them to do their work, and that they are doing well at the unit.

Many pupils say that there are plenty of opportunities in the unit for them to take regular physical exercise, and that other pupils behave well and therefore ensure that pupils can complete their work.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

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|-----------------|---------------------|
| Glyn Griffiths | Reporting Inspector |
| Caroline Rees | Team Inspector |
| Glenda Jones | Lay Inspector |
| Trefor Jones | Peer Inspector |
| Margaret Davies | School Nominee |

Copies of the report

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

Year groups, the Foundation Phase and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|
| Year | N | R | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 | Y6 |
| Ages | 3-4 | 4-5 | 5-6 | 6-7 | 7-8 | 8-9 | 9-10 | 10-11 |

Secondary phase:

| | | | | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year | Y7 | Y8 | Y9 | Y10 | Y11 | Y12 | Y13 |
| Ages | 11-12 | 12-13 | 13-14 | 14-15 | 15-16 | 16-17 | 17-18 |

The Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Foundation Phase | Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 |
| Key stage 2 | Year 3 to Year 6 |
| Key stage 3 | Year 7 to Year 9 |
| Key stage 4 | Year 10 and Year 11 |

Glossary of ALN terms

ADHD: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

ALN: additional learning needs

ASD: Autistic Spectrum Disorders, includes Asperger's Syndrome

ATR: additional teacher resource

BESD, ESBD or SEBD: Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties

CoP: Code of Practice

HI: hearing impairment

MSI: multi-sensory impairment

PMLD: profound and multiple learning difficulties

SpLD: specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia

VI: visual impairment