



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

A report on

Caban Aur

Date of inspection: December 2019

by

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

About Caban Aur

Caban Aur is a small independent school owned by Afon Goch Children's Homes Limited. It is set in its own grounds, in a rural setting on Ynys Môn, surrounded by a nature reserve. The school provides education for pupils looked after by their local authorities and who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils reside at one of the company's two children's homes. There is currently one pupil on the school roll. Pupils who leave the school at the end of key stage 4 may continue to reside in Afon Goch and attend a local college of further education.

The school accommodation consists of a small classroom within the children's home. The school also makes use of other areas of the home, such as the kitchen and lounge, for teaching aspects of the curriculum. There are timetabled weekly opportunities for outdoor activities in the local countryside.

A new headteacher was appointed in September 2019. He is supported by two part-time teachers and a team of outdoor education staff.

Main findings

Strengths

The school is beginning to use external expertise effectively to evaluate its offer and make improvements. This support has provided useful guidance to the proprietor in the appointment of the new headteacher. The new headteacher is beginning to make a positive impact. For example, he has adopted new approaches to pupils' baseline assessments. This development enables staff to plan an appropriate curriculum well matched to pupils' needs.

The school has established positive links with a local high school, which provides suitable opportunities for Year 11 pupils to gain GCSE accreditation in a range of subjects. As they come to the end of their time at the school, this helps pupils to gain a range of qualifications in line with their interests and needs, including accreditation for their outdoor learning. There is careful consideration of further education options, which has led to all pupils who left the school last year sustaining their college placements.

The school has an appropriate focus on developing pupils' healthy eating and living habits. For example, all meals are nutritionally balanced and appetising. Staff and pupils share meal times around the kitchen table in a caring family atmosphere. Staff and pupils value these opportunities to chat and discuss plans together without distractions.

Pupils access a wide range of exciting and motivational outdoor learning activities such as mountain walking, climbing and kayaking. Pupils benefit from these activities and succeed well in gaining accreditation for their learning.

Areas for development

The school is in the process of evaluating and developing its curriculum. It has already made helpful changes to the key stage 4 curriculum to ensure that this meets pupils' needs and interests. However, the changes are incomplete and need time to develop under the leadership of the new headteacher.

Although the school has increased the use of information and communication technology (ICT) within lessons, teachers do not provide pupils with enough planned opportunities to develop their skills across the curriculum.

There is a suitable range of education policies and procedures in place. However, they do not always reflect the revised practice and curriculum changes, such as the increased use of Entry Level accreditation.

Recommendations

The school should:

R1. Ensure that pupils have regular opportunities across the curriculum to develop their ICT skills

R2. Complete the revision of the curriculum

R3. Update relevant education policies and procedures to reflect the revised practice and curriculum changes

R4. Consider developing an independent board to provide support and challenge the work of the school

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

Recommendation 1: Secure appropriate and consistent leadership of the school

The current headteacher took up post in September 2019.

Prior to his appointment there was, over a number of years, significant turmoil in the leadership of the school. However, recently, the proprietor has taken appropriate action to ensure the consistent education of pupils. The actions are effective and, as a result, all Year 11 pupils achieved a suitable range of GCSEs and have all progressed and sustained their placement in further education.

On appointment, appropriately, the new headteacher undertook specific training provided by the organisation to understand the therapeutic model used at the school. Since then, he has begun to review the curriculum, education policies and practice to ensure that the school plans and delivers its provision in line with pupils' needs. However, it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of this work.

Recommendation 2: Make sure that pupils receive regular curricular opportunities to develop their digital competence

Since the last visit, teachers have improved the opportunities for pupils to develop their digital competence. As a result, pupils have had broader experiences to learn and practice their ICT skills across the curriculum. These include using an online platform to develop their touch typing skills, using language learning software as a tool to support Welsh language learning and producing photography to produce attractive wall displays.

The school is beginning to make good use of photography and video to capture pupils' achievement in outdoor education. This supports pupils' assessment of their learning, and enables others to share and celebrate their progress.

Despite these improvements, teachers' planning does not ensure that pupils receive a consistent approach to develop their ICT skills across the curriculum.

Resources to support pupils to develop their ICT skills are insufficient.

Recommendation 3: Increase opportunities to develop pupils' life skills and understanding of the world of work

The school has revised the personal and social education curriculum to better meet pupils' needs. It now includes areas such as the world of work, personal finance and budgeting. Pupils can now gain accreditation for their learning in these areas.

The school has made useful links with a small range of local work providers and arranged for pupils to undertake valuable work experience.

The school carefully considers the vulnerability of individual pupils when considering any potential work placements. Staff undertake suitable assessments of the risks and make appropriate plans to ensure pupils' safety during work experience.

Recommendation 4: Improve the planning and evaluation of outdoor education and ensure pupils can gain relevant accreditation for their achievements

Since the last visit, the school has appointed new staff and the programme of outdoor education has been re-designed. The school now has suitable plans and arrangements for the delivery of an appropriate range of exciting outdoor education including climbing, mountain walking and kayaking. There are appropriate arrangements for evaluating the effectiveness of the activities, mostly linked to relevant accredited learning. Weekly staff meetings enable regular updates and discussions about the appropriateness of each activity for each pupil.

The school has developed suitable risk assessments for the range of activities and for individual pupils' engagement in each activity. Staff make effective use of the risk assessments to inform practice.

Staff who deliver the outdoor curriculum are well qualified and experienced in this area of work.

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, 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 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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 6.

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 Welsh Government 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 limited inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.

Copies of the report

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

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:

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