



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

A report on

Ysgol Y Rhos

Date of inspection: September 2021

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Y Rhos

Ysgol y Rhos is located in the grounds of two former holiday lodges in a rural area between Wrexham and Mold.

The proprietor, Unique Care Homes Ltd., runs four children's homes in Wrexham and Denbighshire. The school is registered for 16 pupils aged 8 to 16 years with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many of the children have a history of placement breakdowns and exclusion from mainstream schools. There are currently 12 pupils on the school roll. All pupils who attend the school are resident in the company's care homes.

Many of the children are placed by local authorities in North Wales, including Gwynedd, Ynys Môn, and Conwy. A very few children are placed by local authorities in England. A few pupils are from Welsh-speaking backgrounds and have previously attended Welsh-medium schools.

The school opened in May 2019. The headteacher has been in post since March 2019.

Main findings

Strengths

Pupil voice is strong across the school. All pupils participate in weekly school council meetings. Pupils take their roles seriously and gather the views of their peers to inform the meetings. This feedback has enabled the headteacher to respond to pupil concerns, for example by developing a pupil-friendly complaints policy.

The outgoing headteacher has provided strong leadership for the school. In addition to managing the operational challenges of keeping the school open throughout the pandemic, she has implemented beneficial changes to the curriculum and systems to support pupil progress.

Areas for development

The school does not comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Space in the school is limited and resources do not meet the curriculum needs of pupils. The headteacher has to plan for pupils to access daily activities off site to accommodate a smaller number of pupils safely on the school site. In addition, limitations on space prevent pupils from adequately experiencing access to specific areas of the curriculum such as life skills and science. There is insufficient space for pupils to eat and meet together, and thus to develop important social interaction skills.

Staff from the company's linked children's homes provide support in the school. These staff have undertaken suitable professional learning to develop their understanding of pupils' social and emotional wellbeing. However, support staff are not deployed consistently enough and do not have the relevant strategies and skills to support pupils' learning and skills development appropriately.

Joint working and effective sharing of information between the therapeutic team and teaching staff is underdeveloped. Current therapeutic approaches do not adequately address the needs of the pupils placed at the school.

The current headteacher will leave her post in October 2021. The company has taken steps to make alternative temporary arrangements to manage this change. However, these arrangements are not sufficiently robust to ensure the continuity of leadership across the school.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.
- R2 Provide appropriate space and resources to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

- R3 Ensure that support staff have suitable skills and training to meet pupils' learning needs
- R4 Strengthen the use of therapeutic assessments and interventions to inform teachers' planning and delivery of the curriculum
- R5 Secure effective leadership at the school

Compliance with the standards for registration

Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school

The school does not fully meet the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school should:

- 1(3) f- Ensure classroom resources are of an adequate quality, quantity and range and are used effectively.

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

The school does not fully meet the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school should:

- 3 (7) deploy staff to ensure the proper supervision of pupils

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

The school does not fully meet the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school should:

- 5 (j) Provide classrooms appropriate in size to allow effective teaching, which do not compromise health or safety having regard to the number, age, and needs (including any special needs) of pupils
- 5(m) ensure where food is served, there are adequate facilities for its hygienic preparation, serving and consumption
- 5(n) Ensure classrooms and other parts of the school are maintained in a tidy, clean, and hygienic state
- 5 (r) Ensure the furniture and fittings are appropriately designed for the age and needs (including any special needs) of all pupils registered at the school

Standard 6: The provision of information

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 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:

The school does not currently meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. To comply fully with these requirements, the school should address the issues identified above for each standard.

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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