



Report summary for parents and carers on Western Learning Federation Ty Gwyn Special School

Date of inspection: November 2022

by Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Overview

Tŷ Gwyn School is one of three special schools that form the Western Learning Federation. The federation was established in January 2018. The aim of the federation is to achieve economies of scale, develop close collaborative working across the schools for the benefit of both pupils and staff, and develop and improve leadership capacity, whilst maintaining the individual identity of each of the three schools.

All three schools are served by one governing body and led by an executive headteacher, who was appointed in 2019.

Tŷ Gwyn School is a happy and caring community. Staff from across the teaching and therapeutic teams work together exceptionally well to provide high levels of support for pupils and families, which enables most pupils to make strong progress during their time at the school.

Pupils enjoy coming to Tŷ Gwyn as a result of the calm and nurturing environment at the school. They feel safe in school and build strong relationships with staff, which helps them to develop their social and independence skills well over time. They engage positively in lessons, learn to work alongside each other and move happily between different activities around the school. In relation to their needs and abilities, they make strong progress in developing their independence and express their views and opinions effectively.

Teachers and support staff have a strong understanding of pupils' complex additional learning needs and work together effectively. They track and monitor pupils' progress robustly and provide parents and carers with detailed information about their child's achievements. In many lessons, they plan purposeful and engaging lessons to support pupils to participate fully in their learning. In a few lessons, the planning of activities is not sufficiently engaging and staff do not use pupils' preferred communication strategies well enough to support pupils' consistent participation in learning.

The school provides valuable support for parents and carers, for example through the school's family centre. It plans effectively to support parents and carers where English is an additional language through ensuring that their language needs are met. This worthwhile support for parents and carers is highly valued by them.

Leaders are highly visible around the school and closely involved in all aspects of the school's work. They know the school's strengths and areas very well. Self-evaluation activities are robust and take suitable account of feedback from pupils, parents and carers in identifying priorities for development.

The school places a high priority on ensuring that it meets national priorities. There are strong arrangements in place to promote the professional learning of teaching staff that align well with the school's priorities.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the school**
- R2 Strengthen the use of communication approaches to ensure that these meet pupils' preferred means of communication consistently**
- R3 Evaluate the impact of the Western Learning Federation on Tŷ Gwyn School**

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare two case studies on its work in relation to the school's support for families, including those who have English as an additional language, and its work within the curriculum to support pupils with complex needs to attend appointments for their personal care, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

School context

Name of provider	Western Learning Federation Ty Gwyn Special School
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Special
Number of pupils on roll	203
Pupils of statutory school age	163
Number in nursery classes	2
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in maintained special schools is 44.7%)	45.8%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in maintained special schools is 100%)	100.0%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	32%
Date of headteacher appointment	09/01/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	05/01/2012
Start date of inspection	21/11/2022
<p>Tŷ Gwyn School provides day education for pupils from 3 to 19 years old. Many pupils are of statutory school age, and a very few are in post compulsory education. The additional learning needs of pupils are varied, and all have a statement of special educational needs. Around 36% of pupils are autistic and a further 35% have physical and medical difficulties. The remaining pupils have a variety of learning difficulties including profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, moderate and general learning difficulties. In addition, a very few pupils have sensory impairments.</p> <p>There are 29 classes at the schools, and 32 full time equivalent teachers and 105 teaching assistants.</p>	

The school, on behalf of the local authority, provides an outreach service to early years providers. This was not included as part of the inspection.

The school has been working with a local university to provide placements for PGCE students.

The school was last inspected in 2012 and the head of school was appointed in September 2022.

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