



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

A report on
Ysgol Y Rhos

Date of inspection: November 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Y Rhos

Ysgol 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 five 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 five 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 Ynys Môn, Conwy, and Gwynedd. There are no pupils currently 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 January 2019 and employs five full-time, permanent teachers, including the headteacher. The headteacher has been in post since September 2022.

Main findings

Strengths

Since their appointments this year, the headteacher and the staff have rapidly developed a shared vision for the school.

Staff, over a relatively short space of time, have developed appropriate relationships with pupils and generally support their engagement in learning well.

The school is a positive learning environment. Wall displays, for example, proudly celebrate pupils' work.

The headteacher is developing a culture of reflection and improvement and is strengthening systems and procedures at the school. However, due to the recency of her appointment, this work is at an early stage of development.

Areas for development

For the second consecutive year, the school does not fully comply with the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

The school is using the Curriculum for Wales framework and staff are engaging well in planning the areas of learning that they are responsible for. However, systematic planning to develop teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills in these areas is currently underdeveloped.

The school uses a range of useful standardised assessments to establish baseline information on pupils' current ability. However, the systematic use of this information to inform planning is underdeveloped.

Annual reports to parents provide a useful account of general progress in subjects. However, they do not clearly state the expected progress of pupils against their known starting points.

Teaching staff provide useful and informative verbal feedback to pupils on their work. However, written feedback does not always outline the next steps in learning well enough.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Comply fully with the Independent Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003
- R2 Ensure that all teaching staff have appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills for the areas of learning that they have responsibility for
- R3 Make better use of baseline information to plan provision and monitor the progress that pupils make
- R4 Continue to refine and strengthen systems to evaluate the work of the school and its services

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous visit or inspection report

R1. To comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003

Since the last visit the school has made appropriate progress against areas of non-compliance identified at that time. For example, it has taken appropriate steps to ensure that classroom resources are of an adequate quality, quantity and range and are used effectively. Classrooms are appropriately furnished with suitable adaptations for specialist subjects such as art and science.

The school has taken appropriate steps to ensure that staff are deployed to ensure the proper supervision of pupils.

The school has taken appropriate action to ensure that classrooms are appropriate in size to allow effective teaching, which does not compromise health or safety having regard to the number, age and needs (including special educational needs) of pupils.

In addition, the school has taken appropriate action to ensure that where food is served, there are adequate facilities for its hygienic preparation, serving and consumption.

The school has taken appropriate action to ensure that classrooms and other parts of the school are maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state. In addition, the school has ensured that furniture and fittings are appropriately designed for the age and needs (including special educational needs) of the pupils registered at the school.

However, on this visit inspectors noted further aspects of non-compliance under Standard 1 and Standard 6. As a result, for the second consecutive year, the school does not comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations (2003).

R2. Provide appropriate space and resources to support teaching and learning across the curriculum

Since Estyn's annual monitoring visit in September 2021, the school has made appropriate progress towards meeting this recommendation. The school has identified and developed suitable, specialist teaching spaces and resources to improve teaching and learning experiences across the curriculum. These areas include a library, two additional learning spaces, a kitchen, a reflection area, and a small independent learning space. As a result, pupils access various aspects of the curriculum in a more appropriate and stimulating learning environment. In addition, these designated areas develop pupils' independence skills well and support their emotional needs successfully.

R3. Ensure that support staff have suitable skills and training to meet pupils' learning needs

Since the last annual monitoring visit the school is now aware of those members of support staff that also hold a relevant teaching assistant qualification. The school

now uses this information to deploy staff to support pupils' learning more appropriately.

R4. Strengthen the use of therapeutic assessments and interventions to inform teachers' planning and delivery of the curriculum

Art is the primary therapy provided at the school. As part of their work with individual pupils, therapists undertake a range of assessments with them. Since the last visit, the communication between the school and the therapists has been strengthened with more open and regular dialogue taking place. However, the extent to which information from the suite of assessments is being used to inform teachers' planning is in the early stages of development. Overall, the impact that therapy has on pupils' well-being and achievement is not clear enough.

R5. Secure effective leadership at the school

Since the last annual monitoring visit, the school has appointed both a permanent headteacher and deputy headteacher. Both senior leaders and the remaining teaching staff started within the last year. The headteacher and the staff have developed a shared vision for the school and are beginning to work as a cohesive team where they identify priorities for development including developing the curriculum. The school has recently established links with a nearby independent special school and the headteacher benefits from the support provided by the school. However, due to the recency of these appointments, all of this work is at an early stage of development.

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:

- ensure that where pupils have a statement [of special educational needs] the education provided fulfils the requirements of the statement. 1 [2] [e]

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

Standard 6: The provision of information

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:

- ensure that information is provided regarding the particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements [of special educational needs] and for pupils for whom English or Welsh is an additional language 6 [2] [f] and
- ensure that information is provided regarding the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding year are made available 6 [2] [j]

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

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 7.

Recommendation regarding continued 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 (<http://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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).