



Report summary for parents and carers on Ysgol Y Rhos

Date of inspection: December 2023

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

Overview

Ysgol y Rhos is a caring and nurturing community where staff build positive relationships with pupils based on mutual respect. As a result, over their time at the school, many pupils make sound progress in their social skills and confidence. For these pupils, nearly all of whom have struggled with formal education in the past, this represents sound progress.

During their time at the school, a minority of pupils make suitable progress in their literacy and numeracy skills. However, overall, pupils' development of digital skills is limited due to the lack of opportunities for them to use these skills across the curriculum.

Nearly all pupils develop beneficial physical skills through the appropriate focus on sport and outdoor activities. Pupils enjoy these sessions and participate enthusiastically. This also positively supports the development of pupils' resilience and self-confidence.

Currently, there are very limited opportunities for pupils to contribute to decisions that affect the school. In addition, pupils do not develop their leadership skills well enough due to the lack of opportunities available to them.

The school generally provides a balanced curriculum, which meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. However, in a few areas of the curriculum such as technology, personal and social education (PSE), relationships and sex education (RSE) and careers, the provision is limited.

Teachers plan experiences that broadly build on pupils' skills as they move through the school. However, planning does not link consistently well enough to the pupils' additional learning needs or evidence from the school's own assessments. As a result, in a minority of lessons, activities do not provide sufficient challenge or opportunity to build on pupils' previous experiences and learning. In addition, there are limited opportunities for pupils to achieve accreditation within the school.

Teachers plan targets that support learning in relevant areas linked to the objectives from pupils' individual development plans (IDPs) or equivalent. However, there are limited procedures in place to track and monitor progress against these targets and, as a result, there is not a clear picture of the progress pupils make over time. Overall, processes for tracking, monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's work in relation to the progress pupils are making are in the very early stages of development.

Since the school opened in 2019, there have been regular and significant changes to leadership and staffing at the school. Processes and procedures at the school are not consistently embedded due to regular revisions. As a result, this limits the progress staff can make to improve the school and the progress of pupils.

The school is not fully compliant with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 and the school has made limited progress against the recommendations left by inspectors on the last visit.

Recommendations

- R1 Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003**
- R2 Ensure that assessment, behaviour and attendance information is used systematically to provide a clear picture of the progress pupils make over time**
- R3 Improve procedures for quality assurance and improvement planning to focus on pupil progress and the standards they achieve**
- R4 Strengthen the provision for personal and social education, relationships and sex education and careers**

Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school met most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 the school should:

- Ensure the school provides personal, social and health education which reflects the school's aims and ethos [1(2)(f)]
- Ensure teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons [1(3)(d)]
- Ensure there is a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and information from such assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress [1(3)(g)]
- Ensure the school has a framework in place by which pupil performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents and/or by national norms [1(4)]

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school met most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 the school should:

- Provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services [2(d)]
- Assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions [2(e)]

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school met most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 the school should:

- Ensure the school has prepared and implemented a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school [3(2)(b)]
- Keep written records of sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious disciplinary offences [3(8)]
- Maintain an admissions and attendance register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration)(Wales) Regulations 2010 [3(9)]

The suitability of proprietors and staff

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The provision of information

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

What happens next

Since the school does not meet the standards required for registration, the Welsh Government will require the proprietor to submit an action plan within a specified period of time. This plan will set out the steps that the school will take to meet the standards, and the timescale within which it will complete each step.

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what actions the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents/carers at the school.

School context

Name of provider	Ysgol Y Rhos
Proprietor	Unique Care Homes Ltd.
Local authority	Flintshire
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent special
Residential provision?	Yes
Number of pupils on roll	11
Pupils of statutory school age	11
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	04/12/2023
<p>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., is a private limited company, which runs five children’s homes in Wrexham and Denbighshire.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>There are currently 11 pupils on the school roll. All pupils who attend the school are resident in the children’s homes owned by the wider organisation. Around half of the children are placed by local authorities in Wales, including Ynys Môn, Caerdydd, Caerfyrddin and Gwynedd. Around half of the children are placed by local authorities in England.</p> <p>The headteacher has been in post since September 2023 and is the fourth headteacher since the school opened in January 2019. They are supported by four full-time, permanent and qualified teachers. Two of these teachers started in September 2023. Staff from the company’s children’s home support the pupils in the school. In addition, the school works alongside two art psychotherapists.</p>	

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