



Annual monitoring inspection report on:

Genus Education

Date of inspection: January 2014

by

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

Estyn's annual monitoring visits to independent and independent special schools in Wales are required to report on whether the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) registration standards regulations for independent schools are met and, where they are not met, what they need to do in order to comply.

Further information regarding the regulations governing this monitoring visit can be found in the following documentation:

- Welsh Assembly Government: *Independent Schools Information and Registration Handbook*, April 2004; and
- Welsh Office Circular 37/94: *Independent schools which admit pupils with special educational needs*:
 - paragraphs 1-8: granting/removing approval;
 - paragraph 42: changes in character, management or control of the school; and
 - 37/94 paragraph 43: significant differences from approved number.

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Context

Genus Education is registered as an independent school to provide in-house education for children resident in the company's three children's homes who are not able to access mainstream education. Each home has its own classroom accommodation.

The school initially opened in February 2011 and operated only at the Ynys-y-Bwt site. The company set up a classroom at Knowle House in 2012 and another at Station Cottage in 2013.

A Head of Education oversees the education across the three sites. The sites share common documents that include school policies, a development plan and arrangements for assessment, planning and delivery of lessons. Each classroom has a full-time teacher.

The school offers full-time education and follows local authority term times.

Main findings

Strengths

The school's strengths are that:

- it provides a calm, friendly and welcoming environment where pupils feel safe and able to learn. Most pupils engage well in lessons and gain relevant qualifications;
- nearly all pupils demonstrate good behaviour in lessons and around the school. They show respect for visitors, staff and each other;
- the classrooms and outdoor spaces provide appropriate learning environments with suitable resources;
- the curriculum is broad and provides for a wide range of subjects and activities. Lessons are planned well to meet the learning needs of individual pupils. There is appropriate focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The timetable includes daily lessons in English and mathematics;
- Individual Education Plans (IEPs) have well written targets for the development of emotional literacy, improvements in behaviour and the development of verbal communication skills. These targets link well to pupils' statements of special educational needs;
- leaders and managers share their vision well with staff and are committed to a process of continual school improvement; and
- teachers and care support staff work well as a team and have high expectations of the pupils.

Areas for development

The school's areas for development are that:

- leaders have prioritised the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum and teachers make appropriate use of standardised tests to establish reading accuracy and spelling ages for all pupils. However, these assessments are not diagnostic and do not inform target setting for the development of reading skills well enough. IEP targets do not focus on the development of reading comprehension, writing and numeracy;
- teachers plan lessons well to meet the learning needs of pupils and identify opportunities to include literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. However, teachers do not specify in enough detail which literacy or numeracy skill is being targeted in lessons;
- whilst marking in books is up to date, feedback in teacher comments does not always help pupils know what to do to improve their work; and
- the school obtains useful information about the quality of teaching and learning through the use of half-termly quality monitoring visits. However, there is no clear process for self-evaluation across the school and no self-evaluation report.

Recommendations

- R1** Improve the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum and make sure that opportunities for the application of these skills are clearly planned for and include targets for the development of reading comprehension, writing skills and numeracy where relevant
- R2** Continue to develop assessment processes by ensuring that marking indicates consistently what pupils do well and what they need to do to improve
- R3** Use the information from quality monitoring and assessment to develop a robust and regular whole school self-evaluation process

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

Recommendation 1: Ensure that proprietors and staff are involved in a robust self-evaluation process, which informs the school development plan

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

There are half-termly quality monitoring visits to each classroom. Through this programme, all teachers observe their peers and there are also observations by the lead teacher or head of education. The records are detailed and identify ways forward. The outcomes of the visits feed into supervision and annual appraisal meetings and are discussed in the half-termly staff meetings. This provides the school with valuable information to plan training, support and other improvements and is creating a culture of sharing practice. However, the school does not have a clear process for self-evaluation across the school and there is no self-evaluation report. There is an up-to-date school improvement plan, developed with staff, which includes appropriate targets, timescales and success criteria.

Recommendation 2: Clarify the headteacher and lead teacher roles, to ensure continued improvement at an operational and strategic level

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The Head of Education and lead teacher have clear and distinct job descriptions. The lead teacher plays a significant role in the day-to-day running of each site and provides support and mentoring to other teaching staff. He supports the development of assessment, curriculum planning and behaviour support systems across the three sites. The Head of Education provides strategic direction and undertakes performance management and supervision of all teaching staff.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that education resources in both settings are of a high quality and match the learning needs of the individual pupils

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The three classrooms provide a stimulating learning environment and are well resourced with a good range of materials that match the learning needs of individual pupils. All pupils have access to information and communication technology (ICT). Good use is made of outside spaces at each site to enrich the curriculum.

Recommendation 4: Ensure that planning for the key skills of literacy and numeracy are consistent across all subject areas and the wider life of the school

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Leaders have prioritised the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Teachers use standardised tests to establish reading accuracy and spelling ages for all pupils and have identified in planning documents opportunities for pupils to develop these skills. However, the standardised tests are not diagnostic

and do not provide staff with information concerning the strengths and weaknesses of each pupil's reading and spelling skills. As a result, targets for the development of these skills are not precise enough and do not help staff and pupils know what to do to improve their performance. Baseline and target setting for numeracy is underdeveloped.

Recommendation 5: Further develop links with Careers Wales to ensure that pupils have appropriate advice and guidance

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Staff have established appropriate links with a wide range of professionals including advisors from Careers Wales who work well with school staff to manage the transition process for pupils. Although the number of school leavers has been low, staff have supported learners to make successful transitions to the next phase of their education and the world 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, social 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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard five.

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 National Assembly for Wales 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 annual monitoring inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.

School information

School	Genus Education
School number	672/6091
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	22 and 23 January 2014
Proprietor	Genus Care Ltd.
Staff	4 teachers 28 care support staff
Number of pupils	4
Provision	Term time
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school	Social emotional and behavioural difficulties
Last Section 163 inspection	N/A
Last annual monitoring inspection	January 2013
Last CSSIW inspection	Ynys-y-Bwt June 2013 Knowle House June 2013 Station Cottage December 2013

Team information

Reporting Inspector	Anthony Mulcahy
Team Inspector	Jassa Scott