



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

Annual monitoring inspection report on

Aran Hall School

Date of inspection: July 2015

by

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

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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court

Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Crown Copyright 2015: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 11/09/2015

Context

Aran Hall is an independent residential special school for learners with autistic spectrum disorders and challenging behaviour located close to the town of Dolgellau in North Wales. It is part of the SENAD group.

The school aims to provide a nurturing and caring environment with a broad and balanced curriculum that:

- reduces challenging behaviour
- increases functional communication
- develops self-care and independent living skills
- increases community participation and social integration

The school has established links with Nova Southeastern University in the USA and Bangor University in Wales to develop the skills and expertise of its staff in using applied behavioural analysis to plan, monitor and evaluate learners' behaviour and inform teaching approaches.

Currently there are 12 pupils on roll aged from 14 to 18 years of age. All are boys. Eight pupils have statements of SEN. All pupils have 52 week placements. Two pupils are placed by Welsh local authorities and ten are placed by local authorities in England.

The headteacher has been in post since 2003.

Main findings

Strengths

The school's strengths are that:

- Staff create a nurturing learning environment that gives pupils confidence and promotes success. Staff and pupils enjoy positive working relationships.
- Pupils engage well with their learning programmes. They take pride in their work and are proud of their achievements.
- Over time pupils develop their social skills well. They are welcoming to visitors and are polite and courteous to each other.
- The curriculum is tailored to the individual needs of pupils.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' independent living skills.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well.

Areas for development

The school's areas for development are that:

- Only around half of subjects are supported by appropriately detailed schemes of work.
- Targets in individual education plans are generally appropriate to the needs of pupils. However, they do not relate to objectives set out in statements of special educational needs. Pupils have limited opportunities to contribute to formally reviewing these targets.
- The school has implemented a small range of baseline assessments to identify pupils' strengths and areas for development in literacy and numeracy skills. However, these are not in place for all pupils and there is inconsistency in the co-ordination and application of these tests.
- Leaders identify and meet the development needs of teachers regarding behaviour management well. However, the planning and co-ordination of professional development to support teachers in curriculum-related matters are underdeveloped.
- The school has a self evaluation report that links well to a detailed school improvement plan. However, the self-evaluation report is too descriptive and not sufficiently evaluative.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Develop and use detailed and appropriate schemes of work for all subject areas
- R2 Improve individual education plans to include targets that relate to the objectives set out in statements of special educational needs
- R3 Make sure that all pupils have baseline assessments that are used by staff to set work that is matched to the learning needs of all pupils
- R4 Make sure that teachers have access to planned and co-ordinated training in relation to the curriculum areas that they are responsible for
- R5 Improve the self-evaluation report to make it more evaluative

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

Recommendation 1: Improve assessment to ensure that teachers provide pupils with detailed feedback so that they know how to improve their work

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Following the last monitoring visit, the school has introduced a revised marking policy that sets clear expectations for staff and pupils regarding the assessment of work. Teachers have implemented the policy across the curriculum. They mark pupils' work regularly and provide pupils with helpful advice on how to improve their work. Generally, pupils respond well to this advice and correct their work as requested by staff. Leaders have started to monitor the impact of the policy through a useful scrutiny of pupils' work and have identified strengths and areas for development in the application of the policy. Leaders have included these areas for development in the school improvement plan.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that best practice for planning and developing schemes of work is in place across the school

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Around half of learning areas have schemes of work. These schemes are either commercially produced, developed by the school or adapted from examples from other schools. In the best examples, schemes of work are extremely detailed and accommodate the learning needs of pupils from P scale level 8 to L6 of the National Curriculum. In English, for example, there are aspects that relate to analysing language, creative writing and speaking and listening skills. There are clear expectations of pupil success and these are expressed as "I will" statements. However, the school does not plan in this way across all curriculum areas, or well enough for the full range of pupils' abilities.

Recommendation 3: Further develop the lesson observation process to include an evaluation of the standards pupils achieve in lessons

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Leaders have improved the lesson observation process to include a clear focus on standards of teaching and the outcomes that pupils achieve. Leaders use this firsthand evidence to provide teachers with useful written comments on pupils' engagement in learning, progress and skills.

Leaders use the information gained from lesson observations to set clear targets in the school development plan for improving teaching and pupils' standards.

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 5.

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	Aran Hall School
School number	6616022
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	08/07/2015
Proprietor	SENAD
Staff	1 Principal 3 Teachers 4 Classroom Assistants 50 Residential Staff 5 Ancillary Staff
Number of pupils	12
Provision	52 Week Residential
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school	IDD
Last Section 163 inspection	01/03/2010
Last annual monitoring inspection	06/05/2014
Last CSSIW inspection	08/09/2014

Team information

Mr Anthony Mulcahy	Reporting Inspector
Huw Davies	Team Inspector