



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Keystone Education Trust

Unit A
Queensway
Fforestfach
Swansea
SA5 4DH

Date of inspection: October 2011

by

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



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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Context

Keystone Education Trust opened in 2003 as an independent day school for boys and girls aged from 11 to 18 years. A primary department for pupils aged from seven to 11 years opened in 2010. The school provides education for the children of Brethren families who live across a wide area from Cardiff and Swansea. Pupils are not selected on the basis of academic ability. Six trustees manage the school which is wholly funded by charitable giving.

The school is situated in Swansea and the primary and secondary departments are on separate sites about nine miles apart. The primary department is in a former primary school at Birchgrove. The secondary department occupies purpose-built premises at Queensway, Fforestfach, Swansea.

Keystone Education Trust is one of over 30 schools in the UK affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust that have been established by parents during the last 20 years. The Focus Learning Trust is a registered charity that provides expertise and support for its schools. This includes provision of professional development training courses for staff, and a range of curriculum, policy and guidance documents.

Keystone's aim is 'to provide children with a quality education based on Christian principles, which through attention to individual needs will prepare them for adult life'. Through its teaching and learning, the school aims to:

- provide pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum;
- develop fully the potential of each pupil and take them to tertiary entrance level;
- promote respect for persons and property; and
- enable pupils to embark on their chosen vocation equipped with a worthwhile quota of knowledge.

In accordance with parents' wishes, the school allows pupils controlled access to the internet and written texts are approved for use by Focus Learning Trust. Almost all pupils move on to employment within the Brethren community's businesses.

There are 21 pupils in the primary department and 39 pupils in the secondary department, of whom 10 pupils are in the sixth form. Eleven pupils in the secondary department and eight pupils in the primary department receive additional learning support. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or from overseas. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language and all lessons are conducted in English

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Adequate

Current performance

Keystone Education Trust is a good school because:

- pupils achieve good standards and make good or better progress from previous key stages;
- pupils' attendance and behaviour are excellent;
- working relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and support learning well;
- the school supports pupils with special educational needs effectively; and
- learning experiences prepare pupils well for adult life.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- the school complies with all the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003;
- the trustees provide strong support and direction;
- the school is managed efficiently; and
- self-evaluation arrangements take appropriate account of performance data and respond well to the views of parents, pupils and other stakeholders.

However:

- staff roles and responsibilities are not clear enough;
- staff have limited professional development opportunities to improve their work and raise standards; and
- planning for improvement does not identify areas for improvement well enough through rigorous first-hand evidence from lesson observations.

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 meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

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.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, the staff and trustees of Keystone Education Trust need to:

- R1 raise standards in writing skills, particularly at key stage 2 and key stage 3;
- R2 ensure that marking and assessment provide guidance and clear targets that help pupils to improve their work;
- R3 develop more effective transition links and arrangements between the primary and secondary departments; and
- R4 strengthen performance-management arrangements at all levels.

What happens next?

Estyn advises the trustees to amend the current development plan to show what action 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 at the school.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

In 2011, many pupils in key stage 2 attained expected National Curriculum levels in English, mathematics and science and a minority attained above expectations. There is not enough information to judge trends in performance at key stage 2 because the primary department is too new.

Most pupils attain expected National Curriculum levels in all core subjects in line with their abilities in key stage 3. The Focus Learning Trust moderates standards in English externally.

In key stage 4, performance is good, and the school's examination performance has been well above Wales averages in the main indicators over the past three years. Many pupils attain the level 2 threshold (equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C), the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum) and the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics. In 2011, nearly all pupils attained highly across ten subject areas at GCSE.

Performance at post-16 is less consistent, with a fluctuating trend at the level 3 threshold (equivalent to two A levels at grade A*-E). In 2011, all post-16 pupils made good progress and all attained the level 3 threshold. However, only one pupil attained the level 3 threshold in the previous year.

Comparisons with Wales averages are difficult due to the very small number of pupils at each key stage.

There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls. Many pupils make good progress relative to their prior attainment. Around a third of pupils attain GCSEs and AS levels in mathematics, English and French at least a year early. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress relative to their abilities.

No pupil has left the school without a recognised qualification. At the end of Year 11, all pupils continue their education in the school and afterwards go on to employment within the Brethren community.

Many pupils in all key stages make good progress in lessons. Speaking and listening skills are a strong feature for most pupils at all key stages. Nearly all pupils listen carefully to the teacher and others, showing a keen interest in their work. Most pupils have a very good recall of previous learning and explain their views and opinions confidently and articulately.

In key stage 2, many pupils read fluently, with clear expression and enthusiasm. Younger pupils are developing phonic skills appropriately to improve their reading.

Many pupils select information well from a range of texts to read between the lines and draw conclusions. However, in key stage 3 pupils do not develop their skills in analysing and evaluating what they have read well enough.

In all key stages, most pupils use subject-specific vocabulary accurately orally and in writing. Nearly all pupils use a wide and adventurous vocabulary in their written work, although there are inaccuracies in spelling and punctuation across all ages and abilities. In key stage 2, pupils do not present their written work clearly enough. While many key stage 3 pupils write well to describe or narrate, they do not develop sufficiently their skills in writing to inform or persuade.

A few pupils apply their numeracy skills well across the curriculum in measuring and analysing data. Many pupils use information and communication technology well in word-processing their written work in the secondary department. However, pupils do not develop their skills in using a range of information and communication technology applications consistently across the curriculum.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils feel safe in school. Many primary pupils and most secondary pupils believe that the school deals well with bullying. Most pupils understand how to be healthy, for example through their science lessons and by making healthy food choices. Nearly all pupils take part enthusiastically in regular physical exercise using the local playing field and university sporting facilities.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. At all key stages, they are well motivated and show very good levels of concentration. Attendance rates for the last three years are consistently high and punctuality to lessons is very good. All pupils are welcoming, courteous and polite to visitors and other adults. They behave very well in lessons and during recreation time.

Pupils in the primary school council have started to become involved in making decisions, for example about improvements to the school grounds and raising funds for new equipment. Older pupils in both primary and secondary departments have a few opportunities to take on responsibilities as prefects. However, pupils across both departments have not yet been able to play a full role in making decisions about the school's work.

Pupils show care and concern for others through raising substantial funds to support local charities, such as the Air Ambulance and Royal National Lifeboat Institution. They acquire the skills for life and work outside school through a wide range of work-related experiences.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

The school provides an effective curriculum that meets the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. Learning experiences engage pupils, including those with special educational needs, successfully. The subjects offered are

appropriate within the clear framework and detailed curriculum guidance Focus Learning Trust provides. The curriculum prepares pupils well to obtain relevant qualifications and for future employment.

In the primary department, pupils follow a broad and appropriate curriculum which includes the opportunity to learn French. All pupils study a suitable range of GCSE subjects which meet their needs, although they do not have the opportunity to make choices. More able pupils follow GCSE courses and A level modules at least a year early. This helps them to progress successfully to more extended studies, particularly in mathematics, English and French. In the sixth form, pupils choose from an appropriate range of A level and vocational courses.

The school is beginning to plan for progression in the development of pupils' key skills, but this is at an early stage of development. Lesson plans and schemes of work do not always identify opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills clearly enough.

There are well-structured careers, and personal and social education programmes in the secondary school that prepare pupils suitably for the experiences of adult life. The school provides few extra-curricular activities, as a majority of pupils have a long journey to travel home. However, pupils have good opportunities to extend their learning through French exchanges, enterprise activities and educational visits, including a visit to Big Pit for key stage 2 pupils.

Teaching: Adequate

In all lessons, teachers have good knowledge of their pupils, and the quality of working relationships between teachers and pupils is a strength of the school. In the majority of lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and set clear learning objectives that help pupils progress well. In key stage 2, a good variety of interesting tasks engages pupils well. In a few lessons, in both primary and secondary departments, teachers use questions skilfully to test pupils' knowledge and understanding.

In a minority of lessons, in key stage 2 and key stage 3, expectations are not high enough to challenge pupils to develop their thinking and writing skills. Teachers ask closed questions and do not allow enough time for pupils to reason and expand on their oral responses.

Most teachers provide constructive oral feedback during lessons that helps pupils make progress. However, marking is inconsistent across the school and does not give pupils enough guidance about how to improve their work.

The school uses a wide range of tests to assess pupils' progress. These include regular standardised reading and spelling tests that provide useful information. The school tracks progress well across the key stages. However, teachers in the secondary department do not use assessment information well enough to plan lessons appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils.

Reports to parents are informative and many set realistic targets for pupils with clear advice on how to help pupils improve. All parents feel well informed about their children's achievements and progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has appropriate policies and arrangements for supporting pupils' healthy living and wellbeing. In the secondary department, these arrangements include provision for sex education. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils gain a better knowledge and understanding of other countries and cultures through their studies in subjects such as home economics and French. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about tolerance and respect for others in English, citizenship, and personal and social education lessons.

The school makes good use of specialist services and other agencies including the health, psychological, counselling and social services. There are good partnerships with Careers Wales, which helps inform pupils' choices in the sixth form, and with the community police to promote pupils' moral and social development.

Transition arrangements between both primary and secondary departments are limited and there are missed opportunities to support pupils effectively as they move into Year 7.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

The school generally identifies and supports pupils with special educational needs well. Pupils' needs are identified early and a suitable range of systems ensures that these pupils make good progress. The special educational needs co-ordinators in both departments provide good oversight for pupils with additional learning needs and liaise well with other staff to ensure that these pupils receive suitable support in lessons. Comprehensive individual plans for pupils with special educational needs are reviewed regularly.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive and caring Brethren community with an ethos of mutual respect and tolerance. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to all aspects of the school's provision. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of other cultures. Personal and social education and English lessons contribute well to raising pupils' awareness of issues relating to bullying, race and gender.

The new primary department accommodation is attractive, well maintained and well resourced overall. Good quality displays enhance the learning environment. Accommodation in the secondary department is limited, although the school makes best use of its provision. In both departments, pupils have good access to a range of good-quality books. The primary curriculum does not include information and communication technology for pupils' use and this area is under-resourced. A small number of computers are available in the secondary department, although there is no dedicated area for pupils to work independently.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
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Adequate

Leadership: Adequate

The trustees, with guidance from the Focus Learning Trust, provide clear direction to ensure that the school provides education in keeping with the distinct ethos of the Brethren community. The trustees oversee the workings of the school efficiently and maintain a wide range of well-organised, appropriate school policy documents that they review regularly. School policies meet regulatory requirements. Senior teachers for the primary and secondary departments take appropriate responsibility for day-to-day management of their separate areas, with guidance from the trustees. These managers meet with and report regularly to the trustees. They are well respected by pupils.

The new primary department provides a purposeful learning environment where pupils settle quickly and staff work together closely as a team. Daily procedures are efficient. Leaders communicate high expectations and are developing appropriate systems to monitor pupils' performance. Staff meet formally each week to plan for departmental improvement and record their decisions carefully.

However, management of the whole school is currently undergoing significant change because of regional restructuring by the Focus Learning Trust. This has created uncertainty for the staff, particularly in the longer-established secondary department. Here, there are too few opportunities for staff to meet formally and focus on identifying specific issues to improve the quality of the department's provision. There are few formal links between the two departments and staff do not have enough opportunities to work together to improve teaching and learning. Trustees are not involved enough in the self-evaluation process to enable them to challenge and assist the school in the role of critical friend. They do not have a clear enough understanding of the school's work.

Overall, performance management arrangements for staff are at an early stage and do not have enough impact on improving the school's work and raising standards. Staff roles and responsibilities are not clear enough. Focus Learning Trust's plans to introduce performance management for senior teachers have been delayed so these managers do not have clear direction or targets for professional development.

The school meets all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) 2003 Regulations.

Improving quality: Adequate

Leaders in the primary department have a clear understanding of areas of the department's work they need to improve to raise standards. In almost every respect, the inspection team agreed with those areas for development that the primary department identified in its self-evaluation review. In particular, leaders identified the need to improve marking and assessment, develop pupils' writing skills and develop better transition arrangements for pupils transferring to the secondary department.

The primary department has a suitable improvement plan which clearly identifies areas for development.

In the secondary department, self-evaluation procedures are a regular part of the school's practice. The department has made good progress in addressing the recommendations of the last inspection, for example in meeting the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. The department had also taken account of an independent survey of the views of pupils, parents and staff, as well as using feedback information from Focus Learning Trust visits in its self-evaluation.

However, the secondary department's self-evaluation report and improvement plan do not identify appropriate areas for development clearly enough. For example, there is not enough consideration of pupils' attainment, particularly at key stage 3.

Leaders obtain first-hand evidence of teaching and learning from their own observations and those of the Focus Learning Trust. However, the lesson observation arrangements lack rigour and comments are not evaluative enough to have a clear impact on improving teaching or standards.

The school is beginning to develop useful networks with other schools in the Trust, for example to promote good practice and moderate pupils' work. Secondary department staff take part in peer lesson observations. However, their judgements are often too generous and do not identify areas for improvement well enough.

Partnership working: Adequate

The school has strong links with the Focus Learning Trust. Full use is made of this partnership to support policy decisions, curriculum provision and in providing specialist services. Links with parents are good. Parents feel well informed about their children's progress. Many parents provide valuable support by working in the school. Effective partnerships with a range of businesses run by the Brethren support pupils' understanding of the world of work and prepare them well for interviews with prospective employers.

The school has begun to develop links with other Focus schools, including collaborating on a team-building day for all pupils entering the sixth form. However, these partnerships are at an early stage of development.

The primary and secondary departments currently work largely independently. They have not established effective transition arrangements for pupils entering key stage 3. As a result, pupils do not benefit from the potential opportunities in an all-age school for smooth progression in their learning. The school has identified the need to improve these links as a priority in its development plan.

Resource management: Adequate

All staff are appropriately qualified and experienced to carry out their roles. Most secondary department staff are subject specialists and have part-time posts. Overall, staff are deployed appropriately and there are enough support staff to ensure the smooth running of the school.

Senior teachers from both departments attend meetings and liaise with Focus Learning Trust staff from other schools to promote good practice. For example, they arranged a joint training day for subject teachers to meet and share teaching approaches. Other staff have fewer opportunities to take part in such activities.

Almost all staff have attended courses covering an appropriate range of health and safety issues but have less opportunity to attend courses to develop their professional skills. Performance-management arrangements do not identify the professional development needs of individual staff. In the secondary department, a few staff have attended appropriate courses offered by examination boards that are relevant to their subject.

The trustees respond well to staff requests for resources and, overall, make effective provision for pupils. The school relies largely upon charitable funding and uses its resources carefully. The school ensures that pupils attain good standards and provides value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Fourteen parents responded to the questionnaire. Overall, their responses are very positive. They are all satisfied with the school and feel that it is well run.

They agree that their children are safe in school, enjoy being there and are making good progress. Parents believe that teaching is good and homework builds well on what their children learn at school. They all feel that staff expect their children to work hard and they are kept well informed of their children's progress. Parents say that their children are encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise. A very few parents do not think that there is a good enough range of activities including trips or visits.

All parents believe that their children are well prepared for moving to the next stage of their learning and that the school helps them become more mature. A very few parents do not feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions or a problem. However, all parents agree that their children receive appropriate support for any particular needs.

Responses to pupil questionnaires

Estyn received responses from 47 pupils, selected at random from across the age range. Many pupils gave very positive responses to the questions, particularly primary-aged pupils.

All pupils agree that they feel safe in school. All primary and most secondary pupils believe that they are doing well at school, that teachers help them to learn, and that they know what to do and whom to ask if they find work hard. Most primary pupils say that they have enough books and equipment and that nearly all children behave well at playtime and lunchtime. A minority of primary pupils disagree that homework helps them to understand and improve work in school and that other pupils behave well and they can get their work done. Most secondary pupils say that staff respect them and their background, and that the school helps them to understand and respect people from other backgrounds. However, around half do not feel that staff treat them fairly and with respect.

Many primary pupils and most secondary pupils believe that the school deals well with any bullying. Many primary pupils say that there are plenty of opportunities to get regular exercise, but a minority of secondary pupils disagree.

Many secondary pupils state that they were given good advice when choosing courses in the sixth form, but half disagree that the advice was good at key stage 4. All secondary pupils say that they are encouraged to do things for themselves and take on responsibility. A majority of secondary pupils believe that the school listens to their views and makes the changes they suggest.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Jackie Gapper	Reporting Inspector
Rosemary Lait	Team Inspector
Linda Williams	Team Inspector
Rosemary Hart	Peer Inspector
Paul Scudamore	Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003: 3 and 5
Adam England	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11