



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

A report on

**Denbighshire PRU
Ysgol Plas Cefndy
Cefndy Road
Denbighshire
LL18 2HG
United Kingdom**

Date of inspection: November 2014

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 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Denbighshire PRU is an all age pupil referral unit (PRU) for pupils experiencing social emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). Over the last two years it has undergone considerable changes, mainly in terms of accommodation. The PRU is accommodated on two sites, but with an integrated line management structure, and overseen by a single management committee.

The main site at Ysgol Plas Cefndy houses a key stage 3 and 4 provision for pupils with SEBD as well as Milestones, a key stage 3 and 4 provision for pupils with emotional difficulties. The other site houses Stepping Stones, a primary provision for pupils with SEBD.

The PRU aims to return every pupil to mainstream education or to further education, training or employment. The Stepping Stones provision is mainly short-term, with pupils attending on a split placement with their mainstream school.

There are currently 47 pupils on roll. Admissions to the PRU are managed through a local authority moderation panel. All pupils are dual registered with their mainstream school. All pupils have access to full-time education.

Sixty per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Seventeen per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs and all pupils are on the SEN register. Pupils are predominantly from English speaking homes. Currently only 2% of pupils attending the PRU are “looked after” by the local authority.

The PRU was last inspected in May 2009.

Summary

The PRU's current performance	Good
The PRU's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The PRU's current performance is good because:

- standards of achievement are good and pupils make good progress in learning;
- most pupils learn to manage their behaviour over time;
- learning experiences are well matched to the needs, interests and abilities of the pupils; and
- partnerships with parents, mainstream schools and the local authority in order to reintegrate pupils to mainstream provision are good.

Prospects for improvement

The PRU's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher, staff and the management board share a clear vision;
- there are strong links with the local authority behaviour support service and effective partnerships with specialist agencies;
- leaders set challenging targets and have clear priorities for improvement; and
- leaders have a successful record of managing change.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that arrangements for assessment are consistent across the PRU
- R2 Improve the key stage 4 learning environment and the arrangement of rooms in key stage 3
- R3 Widen the consultation in self-evaluation to include all major stakeholders
- R4 Make sure that the provision of toilets at Ysgol Plas Cefndy meets regulatory requirements
- R5 Improve the use of data to inform target setting

What happens next?

The PRU will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Pupils at the PRU have a range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They start at the PRU with little confidence, have difficulty controlling their behaviour, and have a history of poor attendance. Due to the high level of support and encouragement that they receive from staff, many pupils make good progress in developing their confidence and attendance. They make good progress over time in line with their age, ability and learning needs.

Nearly all pupils in the primary provision at Stepping Stones respond well to the nurturing ethos of the centre and develop the confidence and social skills necessary to make a successful fulltime return to their primary school. Last year, 94% of pupils from Stepping Stones and 55% of pupils from key stage 3 were successfully reintegrated into mainstream placements. This is a significant achievement.

Most pupils in the secondary provision develop the skills necessary to make successful transitions to mainstream schools, colleges of further education or work placements. Last year, 88% of leavers continued in full-time education. Most pupils gain a range of qualifications appropriate to their interests and abilities. These include WJEC Entry Level, GCSE and vocational qualifications.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve at the PRU with national averages or to analyse the performance trends of groups over time because of the nature of the pupils' learning needs.

Most pupils across the PRU achieve well against their targets. There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls, pupils who receive free school meals and those who are in the care of their local authority.

Many pupils make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills and apply these well in a range of subjects and settings, including partner mainstream schools.

Most pupils at key stage 4, including those at the Milestones centre, develop independent writing skills appropriate for their age and ability. More able pupils write for a wide range of purposes and audiences. They organise and present their ideas clearly and think through questions and answers for themselves. They use punctuation and spelling accurately in extended pieces of creative writing.

Most pupils at Stepping Stones use an appropriate range of number skills. They show good understanding of place value and use the four rules of number appropriate for their age and ability. Pupils at key stage 3 use equipment to measure angles accurately and know the properties of different types of triangle.

At Stepping Stones, most pupils read accurately and use their understanding of the text to draw appropriate conclusions and suggest how characters feel.

Most pupils at both Milestones and Stepping Stones make very good progress with their ability to work with others and solve problems. They work collaboratively in groups and in pairs, and many also work well independently. They listen and respond well to others and contribute well to group discussions. More able pupils use thinking skills well and ask thoughtful questions to extend their understanding and make links between subjects across the curriculum. For example, in English lessons, pupils in Milestones refer to what they have learned in religious education (RE). They ask about the beliefs of the major world faiths and can identify how these have an impact on the way that believers live.

Nearly all pupils at Stepping Stones and a very few at Ysgol Plas Cefndy make appropriate progress in using Welsh effectively when communicating with staff and each other.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils in the PRU are positive about their work and respond well to staff and visitors. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and drinking and taking regular exercise. Pupils in Milestones care for a garden area and grow produce, which they use to cook healthy meals.

Nearly all pupils take part in regular exercise. Younger pupils do daily stretching exercises in the classroom while older pupils enjoy a range of outdoor education activities including cricket and golf.

Pupils know whom to talk to if they are worried and they show a high level of trust in the staff. They respond well to a wide range of age-appropriate activities dealing with issues that affect them. At key stage 4, pupils discuss relevant issues such as domestic violence and cyber-safety. Across the PRU, pupils learn strategies to keep themselves safe. These include the importance of respecting personal space and appropriate behaviour at home and in public.

Many pupils with a poor record of attendance from their mainstream school make very good progress with their attendance. However, a few pupils in key stage 4 continue to attend irregularly. This low attendance has a negative impact on their standards and wellbeing.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and during unstructured times. They show respect for others, for example during a special event to commemorate the Armistice at the end of the First World War.

Most pupils show interest in lessons and ask questions in order to improve their understanding. They respond very positively to the staff's high expectations and show a mature approach to their learning.

From the Foundation Phase upwards, pupils learn how to make appropriate choices. Nearly all key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils use a 'Pupil Voice' box. This is used for

secret ballots and also to express individual suggestions or worries. However, pupils rarely contribute to decisions about matters that affect them in the PRU.

Pupils take part in valuable community projects, for example analysing the effect of litter on the environment.

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

The PRU provides a comprehensive range of learning experiences for all pupils. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of individual pupils. For example, the PRU provides opportunities for the more vulnerable learners to find out about the world of work by working on the PRU site.

There is a strong focus on reintegration for pupils at Stepping Stones and key stage 3 at Ysgol Plas Cefndy. The curriculum supports this very well. Pupils divide their time between the PRU and mainstream schools and gradually increase their time in mainstream. As a result, most build up the confidence they need to return to and remain in school.

The planning for the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is thorough. There is a comprehensive policy to support this work. Pupils have many opportunities to develop these skills and transfer them to different situations. The Wrexham FC project is a valuable resource and is highly successful in motivating pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and adopt healthy lifestyles.

The wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills outside the classroom is a strength of the curriculum. For example, opportunities to work with the army, experience climbing and take part in Duke of Edinburgh award challenge activities help pupils to develop communication, problem solving and team work skills.

There is an appropriate personal and social education curriculum across all key stages. Pupils have many opportunities to become aware of and reflect on important issues that may impact on their lives such as human rights, homelessness and racism.

There is an effective Eco-committee at Milestones. However, the PRU has not developed education for sustainable development and global citizenship consistently across the curriculum.

Teaching: Good

Teachers and teaching assistants work together well to provide stimulating and well-resourced lessons. They know the individual needs of their pupils and have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They manage pupils' behaviour skilfully. As a result, many pupils learn to manage their behaviour and are successfully reintegrated into mainstream placements.

Teachers plan lessons carefully. They set clear learning objectives and employ a wide range of teaching strategies and resources that are well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils.

Where teaching is excellent, teachers make very good use of questioning, which enables pupils to recall and extend their knowledge and understanding. They provide pupils with encouraging oral feedback on their work and behaviour. This helps most pupils to remain focused and achieve well in lessons. Teachers at Stepping Stones use a wide range of assessment strategies in lessons to encourage pupils to judge their progress and think about how they might improve. There are effective arrangements for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress.

Teachers mark pupils' work promptly and nearly always include positive comments to encourage pupils. However, marking is not consistent across the PRU and does not always outline what pupils need to do to improve. There are limited opportunities for pupils in the key stage 3 and 4 provision at Ysgol Plas Cefndy to reflect on their own and others' learning.

Parents and partner schools are kept up-to-date about pupil progress through regular and informative reports.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The PRU has a comprehensive range of policies to support the health and wellbeing of all pupils. Staff use a carefully planned range of strategies such as 'thought for the day' to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.

Programmes are tailored and adapted to meet individual needs. Each child has a range of appropriate weekly targets. Pupils and parents help to set these targets and they are reviewed regularly. Parents receive detailed information about their child's progress on a daily basis.

Communication is a strong feature of the provision. All staff liaise regularly to ensure that the support for pupils is consistent. This team approach gives pupils security and confidence. However, the school council was only recently formed and arrangements for pupils to have a say about matters that affect them are underdeveloped.

An appropriate and well-planned personal and social education programme provides pupils with useful information about sex and relationships and substance misuse. Where necessary, staff put in extra support to meet specific needs as they arise. In this way, highly vulnerable pupils receive the help they need during times of crisis.

The PRU uses incentives and rewards well to improve attendance and behaviour.

The PRU has efficient arrangements for identifying pupils' additional needs. All pupils have appropriate individual behaviour plans and those with additional learning needs also have detailed individual education plans. These are monitored closely. The PRU arranges advice and specialist support where pupils have particular needs.

The PRU's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Adequate

The PRU is an inclusive community, which values diversity and ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and wider learning activities.

The Stepping Stones provision is situated on a secure site with a small grassed area and a hard standing playing area. These areas provide useful additional learning space for physical education and outdoor games. The buildings are very well maintained and the accommodation bright, attractive and well resourced. It provides pupils with a stimulating learning environment.

The buildings and grounds at the Ysgol Plas Cefndy site are also secure and well maintained. Internally, the accommodation is suitable for the numbers on roll. Pupils in the Milestones group and key stage 3 work in attractive and welcoming environments. However, the pupils in key stage 4 do not benefit from such a welcoming environment. There are examples of broken furniture, stained carpets and damage to doors and locks.

The toilet provision at this site is unsatisfactory in that male and female pupils and staff in the key stage 4 teaching area are expected to share the same facilities. Not all toilets used by girls have hygiene bins.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

Managers have a clear and appropriate vision for the work of the PRU, which places a strong emphasis on improving pupils' outcomes and their reintegration into mainstream schools. This vision is shared by all staff.

Staff feel valued and work very well together as a cohesive team to make sure that priorities are delivered effectively. They have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which are well understood. They are encouraged by managers to reflect on their practice and share the responsibility for planning school improvement.

The management committee gives good support to the headteacher. Members know the PRU and its pupils well and receive regular and comprehensive reports about the work of the PRU. These reports include data about pupils' achievements, exclusions and attendance. However, the management committee does not evaluate the data and resulting actions that contribute to improving pupil outcomes. The role of the management committee to provide challenge to the PRU is underdeveloped.

The PRU meets national and local priorities well. This includes the literacy and numeracy framework and developing the capacity of mainstream schools to support vulnerable pupils through an effective training programme.

Improving quality: Adequate

The self-evaluation report is of good quality. It is evaluative and comprehensive and includes relevant data. There are clear links between the self-evaluation report and the school improvement plan. The plan clearly identifies appropriate priorities and actions and contains clear timescales and specific responsibilities. Teachers and mainstream schools were fully involved in the self-evaluation process and received feedback. However, the consultation process was too narrow. The management committee, teaching assistants, parents and carers, pupils and other stakeholders were not consulted.

The PRU recognises that there is a need to improve the use of data to inform school improvement. Managers collect a useful range of data on pupils' outcomes and can identify how well particular individuals and groups are working. There are examples of careful analysis, such as the examination results in individual subjects, which result in actions to improve results. However, the collection and analysis of data are inconsistent across the PRU. Managers do not use data carefully enough to measure success and set targets for whole school improvement.

Systems for monitoring staff performance are well embedded. Performance management objectives link well to professional development opportunities, the PRU improvement plan and a corporate services priority plan. All objectives relate very carefully to improving pupil outcomes.

Managers carry out regular lesson observations. Teachers receive valuable written feedback so that targets for improvement can be set. This process is well supported by a regular book trawl, which focuses on pupil outcomes.

Partnership working: Good

The PRU's partnership with mainstream schools is a strength. This partnership supports the pupils' high reintegration rate very well. PRU staff model teaching for mainstream staff and give them useful strategies to help them meet the needs of individual pupils. Partner schools highly value this input.

The PRU works well with a wide range of external partners in order to improve the outcomes for vulnerable learners. For example, PRU staff benefit from the expertise of the Youth Justice Service in developing behaviour management strategies that enable vulnerable pupils to remain in school placements.

Staff are in close contact with parents and carers, who feel well supported and able to express their concerns when necessary. They benefit from taking part in a very useful course delivered by PRU staff on behaviour management.

There is a strong partnership with two local colleges and the 14-19 learning network. This has increased pupils' opportunities for work experience, widened their curriculum activities and helped them to move on to further education and training.

The head of the PRU has developed strong links with other PRUs across north Wales. This forum shares good practice and has supported the successful implementation of the literacy and numeracy framework in the PRU.

Resource management: Good

The PRU is appropriately staffed to deliver the curriculum. Staff are well qualified and are deployed well to meet the needs of individual learners. They have access to a wide range of appropriate in house and external training. This includes an opportunity to increase their own GCSE qualifications alongside pupils.

High quality resources and facilities are used effectively to match the interests and abilities of all learners.

The learning environment is used well, making best use of space and facilities available. However, in key stage 3 at Ysgol Plas Cefndy, if a member of staff needs to take a pupil away from the classroom, this is not possible without disrupting others. Staff have appropriate planning, preparation and assessment time. Well-equipped staffrooms/preparation rooms at both sites enable them to plan their work carefully and provide pupils with a wide variety of personal and learning experiences.

The PRU manages its staff and finances effectively. The headteacher works effectively with the local authority to keep the budget under careful scrutiny. This, along with the good outcomes for pupils, means that the PRU provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
I feel safe in my school.	25	19 76%	3 12%	3 12%	Rwy'n teimlo'n ddiogel yn fy ysgol.
		76%	12%	12%	
The school deals well with any bullying.	25	10 40%	9 36%	6 24%	Mae'r ysgol yn delio'n dda ag unrhyw fwlio.
		40%	36%	24%	
I know who to talk to if I am worried or upset.	24	17 71%	5 21%	2 8%	Rwy'n gwybod pwy i siarad ag ef/â hi os ydw I'n poeni neu'n gofidio.
		71%	21%	8%	
The school teaches me how to keep healthy	25	10 40%	6 24%	9 36%	Mae'r ysgol yn fy nysgu i sut i aros yn iach.
		40%	24%	36%	
There are lots of chances at school for me to get regular exercise.	25	11 44%	9 36%	5 20%	Mae llawer o gyfleoedd yn yr ysgol i mi gael ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		44%	36%	20%	
I am doing well at school	25	13 52%	3 12%	9 36%	Rwy'n gwneud yn dda yn yr ysgol.
		52%	12%	36%	
The teachers and other adults in the school help me to learn and make progress.	24	20 83%	2 8%	2 8%	Mae'r athrawon a'r oedolion eraill yn yr ysgol yn fy helpu i ddysgu a gwneud cynnydd.
		83%	8%	8%	
I know what to do and who to ask if I find my work hard.	25	20 80%	2 8%	3 12%	Rwy'n gwybod beth I'w wneud a gyda phwy i siarad os ydw I'n gweld fy ngwaith yn anodd.
		80%	8%	12%	
My homework helps me to understand and improve my work in school.	25	4 16%	14 56%	7 28%	Mae fy ngwaith cartref yn helpu i mi ddeall a gwella fy ngwaith yn yr ysgol.
		16%	56%	28%	
I have enough books, equipment, and computers to do my work.	25	16 64%	7 28%	2 8%	Mae gen i ddigon o lyfrau, offer a chyfrifiaduron i wneud fy ngwaith.
		64%	28%	8%	
Other children behave well and I can get my work done.	25	11 44%	9 36%	5 20%	Mae plant eraill yn ymddwyn yn dda ac rwy'n gallu gwneud fy ngwaith.
		44%	36%	20%	
Nearly all children behave well at playtime and lunch time	25	9 36%	6 24%	10 40%	Mae bron pob un o'r plant yn ymddwyn yn dda amser chwarae ac amser cinio.
		36%	24%	40%	

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Anthony Mulcahy	Reporting Inspector
Ann Dackevych	Team Inspector
Claire Yardley	Team Inspector
Justine Barlow	Lay Inspector
Michelle Hatcher	Peer Inspector
Ceri Ellis	Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, Reception, 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

Glossary of ALN terms

ADHD: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

ALN: additional learning needs

ASD: Autistic Spectrum Disorders, includes Asperger's Syndrome

ATR: additional teacher resource

BESD, ESBD or SEBD: Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties

CoP: Code of Practice

HI: hearing impairment

MSI: multi-sensory impairment

PMLD: profound and multiple learning difficulties

SpLD: specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia

VI: visual impairment