



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

**Penrhos Avenue Alternative Education Service
Old Colwyn
Colwyn Bay
LL29 9HW**

Date of inspection: January 2013

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.

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 2013: 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: 19/03/2013

Context

The Alternative Education Service is a local authority maintained pupil referral unit for pupils aged 14 to 16 years who are experiencing difficulties relating to social, emotional, behavioural or attendance issues.

The provision is situated at Penrhos Avenue Education Centre in Old Colwyn in Conwy.

The majority of pupils referred to the Alternative Education Service have been underachieving as a result of poor engagement or attendance in their mainstream school.

The Service aims to meet the needs of the pupils, to ensure that they can reach their potential and to help them continue on their Learning Pathway post-16. All pupils are entered for external examinations and other vocational accreditation.

Additionally the Alternative Education Service provides a home tuition service for pupils of all key stages unable to access their mainstream school for medical reasons. If appropriate, some home tuition pupils attend sessions in centre.

Pupils are admitted through the local authority's Social Inclusion Service Moderation Panel.

Currently there are 53 pupils on roll. All pupils are registered on the Service's special educational needs (SEN) register and ten pupils have statements of SEN. A few of the pupils are looked after by the local authority.

Nearly all pupils are dual registered with their mainstream schools.

Pupils come from a cross-section of social backgrounds and represent a range of ability. Approximately 45% are entitled to free school meals. All pupils are from families where English is the predominant language, although a minority have Welsh as a second language.

At the time of the inspection, the Alternative Education Service has an acting deputy and an acting centre teacher. The current co-ordinator of the Service was appointed in 2008.

The Alternative Education Service was last inspected in February 2007. During the previous inspection the Service was catering for both key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils. Since 2011-2012, key stage 3 pupils have been moved to another PRU within the local authority.

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

Summary

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

Current performance

The Alternative Education Service is good because:

- pupils achieve good standards and make good progress;
- the co-ordinator provides clear leadership;
- most pupils gain confidence and show improved behaviour and positive attitudes to learning;
- teaching is of good quality;
- the Service provides good care, support and guidance; and
- there is a good range of learning and accreditation opportunities.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects of improvement are judged as good because:

- staff work effectively as a team and have high expectation of the pupils;
- the co-ordinator and his acting deputy have identified clear routes, strategies and resources for improvement; and
- there are strong partnerships with other establishments that strengthen pupils vocational and learning experiences.

Recommendations

- R1 Further improve pupils' attendance
- R2 Ensure that pupil voice is established on a formal basis
- R3 Increase the opportunities for pupils to use incidental Welsh language skills
- R4 Strengthen the expertise and representation on the management committee in order to provide more appropriate challenge
- R5 Widen opportunities for pupils to increase their understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship

What happens next?

The Alternative Education Service will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils make good progress compared with their previous attainments. Most show good recall of previous learning, and apply their skills confidently to various activities and lessons. Pupils of all groups achieve equally.

Most pupils make good progress towards achieving the learning targets set for them in their individual education plans. Many know what they need to do to improve their work. They have a good understanding of how well they have achieved within their lessons, identifying strengths and areas for further improvement.

Many pupils show continuous improvement in developing their literacy and numeracy skills and all have attained appropriate qualifications.

Over the last three years, all pupils have gained nationally recognised qualifications and awards. The more able pupils gained at least one pass at GCSE (A*-C) grade. In 2011, many pupils gained a pass grade in GCSE courses.

Most pupils make good progress in their communication skills. The more able pupils use a good range of vocabulary related to specific topics and express their ideas clearly. Most pupils listen attentively and are eager to participate in discussions. They show confidence when communicating with others and when expressing themselves.

Most pupils make good progress in their reading skills. They have a good understanding of different text types and read aloud confidently. Many use their reading skills well in a variety of contexts including on vocational courses such as catering and vehicle maintenance.

The more able pupils successfully apply their writing skills in a wide range of tasks. Most pupils gather and present written information clearly when researching specific topics. Many pupils can write for different purposes such as letter writing, reviewing a website or creating their own rap music.

Many pupils show well-developed thinking and decision-making skills. They use these effectively to recall previous learning, discuss current issues and agree on solutions to problem-solving activities.

Most pupils are able to use a range of both new and established information and communication technology (ICT). They apply their ICT skills very well in a wide range of activities, for example in studying the impact of advertising.

Most pupils apply their numeracy skills appropriately in a range of activities. For example, they calculate the cost of a holiday, undertake vehicle maintenance or weigh ingredients accurately in a catering lesson.

Those pupils who follow a formal Welsh second language course make good progress. However, nearly all pupils do not make sufficient use of the language on an incidental basis.

Pupils access an increasing range of vocational opportunities and work experience placements. The pupils show a good awareness of work-related issues where they apply a range of skills such as communication securely and confidently.

All pupils progress to courses at a local college of further education or on to apprenticeships or suitable further training courses. These achievements prepare them well for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of how to keep healthy. Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to taking regular exercise such as fitness activities and team games. Most pupils show a good awareness of how to maintain a healthy diet.

Most pupils feel safe and supported. They have good working relationships with staff and they appreciate the consistently positive support from staff.

Most pupils consider that bullying is infrequent and that staff deal with it effectively. Pupils are confident about asking for help and recognise that they always have someone to talk to if they are worried. The majority of pupils are enthusiastic about learning. They enjoy their lessons and arrive punctually.

Behaviour in lessons and at break times is good. Most pupils are respectful to staff, tolerant of each other and polite and courteous to visitors.

Attendance has improved over the last few years. Attendance for 2011-2012 and for the first term of 2012-2013 is still too low. However, the attendance of most individual pupils is significantly better than when they attended their mainstream school. The number of exclusions has reduced significantly over the last three years. However, a very few learners have persistently poor attendance.

Pupils express their views well during meetings and through their daily contact with staff. They contribute effectively to personal decision-making by participating in setting and reviewing their targets. However, there is no formal pupil council and, although informal communication is good, pupils have limited opportunity to voice their collective opinions and views.

Pupils develop their social and life skills well through a range of community and vocational activities such as vehicle maintenance, hairdressing and catering.

Most pupils have a good understanding of what they want to do in the future. Over time, more able pupils learn how to become independent learners. They gain confidence in making informed choices, which prepares them well for further learning or the world of work.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The broad and balanced curriculum provides a good range of learning opportunities, including both academic and vocational courses within the Learning Pathways 14-19. There is a well-planned and valuable programme of personal and social education which provides pupils with good quality information including awareness of drugs, sex education and internet safety.

Staff group pupils carefully to take account of both learning and behavioural needs. Each pupil has individualised targets to help them learn effectively.

All pupils are given good opportunities to gain appropriate nationally accredited qualifications. More able pupils, including those on home tuition, take GCSEs and make very good progress. There are effective and supportive links with local secondary schools and colleges to enhance pupils' learning through specific courses such as construction and car mechanics.

Pupils with a particular interest or skill are enabled to extend their learning by attending off site specialist facilities, for example in art and music.

There are good opportunities for pupils to experience the world of work. For example, pupils can choose work-related courses such as car mechanics, work-experience at a hairdressing salon, or catering.

The Service provides valuable opportunities for pupils to participate in the community through activities that help them build confidence and develop skills for team work, such as planning and delivering the annual charity coffee morning.

Teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' communication, literacy and problem-solving skills. There are also good opportunities, identified in planning, for pupils to utilise numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. There is regular monitoring and evaluation of pupil progress in the development of skills. The Service provides extra support in literacy where appropriate and more able pupils have extension work in mathematics.

There is good provision for the teaching of Welsh as a second language. However, there is insufficient promotion of Welsh on an incidental basis. There are a range of good opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to understand aspects of Welsh culture.

There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of education for sustainable development and global citizenship.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is consistently good. In all classes, teachers have high expectations of pupils and adapt lessons well to meet their individual needs. They use a wide range of teaching strategies effectively. All teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources that reflect the interests of the pupils.

Teachers and support staff work closely together and create very positive working relationships with pupils. Support staff are clear as to their role and provide high quality support. In all lessons, staff manage pupils' behaviour very well. They deal with the few incidents of inappropriate behaviour effectively and consistently.

Very occasionally, teachers provide too much support for pupils in lessons, either verbally or through the over use of worksheets.

Through effective assessment of pupils on entry, teachers identify clear targets for pupils and enable teachers to plan for individual needs. Teachers use ongoing assessments well to track the progress pupils make and to modify the support that they require.

Although the quality of marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, all staff provide clear verbal feedback to pupils so that they know what they have achieved and what they need to do in order to improve. At the end of each lesson, teachers ensure that pupils have the opportunity to assess their own progress.

Pupils' progress is regularly reviewed and parents and carers are kept fully informed. Staff invite parents to half-termly reviews and regularly provide them with detailed written reports.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The quality of care, support and guidance provided for pupils is good. There are appropriate policies in place which are implemented consistently to promote pupils' health and wellbeing.

The Service successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Very effective use is made of a wide range of specialist services such as careers officers, speech and language therapists and educational psychologists. Many pupils state that they receive good information and guidance when choosing their courses. This support contributes well towards raising pupils' self-esteem, improving their personal skills and preparing them well for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

All pupils, including those with additional learning needs, have specific individual learning plans that highlight their needs. Pupils are involved with regularly setting and reviewing their targets. This enables them to reflect on and share responsibility for their progress.

The additional learning needs co-ordinator works effectively with subject and pastoral staff to support all pupils' access to the curriculum. Teachers and support staff work very well together. They are knowledgeable about the specific needs of their pupils and provide cohesive and skilful support.

The annual reviews of statements are well organised and informative.

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

Learning environment: Good

The Alternative Education Service is an inclusive community where most pupils treat others with respect and consideration.

All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to the facilities provided by the Service. Staff promote and celebrate diversity well within the curriculum and through wider activities.

The staff create a caring, supportive and welcoming ethos and provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.

The well-maintained accommodation is spacious, appropriately furnished and utilised effectively. Outside areas provide sufficient space for recreational activities, and are safe and well maintained.

Resources are of a good standard and are well matched to pupils' needs. These effectively enhance pupils' achievement and help to motivate their participation in activities. The attractive, colourful and informative wall displays celebrate the successes and achievement of the pupils.

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

Leadership: Good

The co-ordinator and the acting deputy provide good leadership and strategic direction. They share clear aims and a common vision with all staff. The senior management team communicate high expectations to all members of staff.

The strong leadership has developed a clear focus to establish the positive learning environment in which improved outcomes for pupils are a priority.

The co-ordinator regularly undertakes lesson observations as part of the performance management of staff. The resulting professional development reviews are recorded, clearly identifying individual targets and training needs.

The senior management team works successfully to implement the school effectiveness framework through effective links with other educational establishments with a focus on national and local priorities such as numeracy and literacy. These have contributed successfully towards improving pupils' standards in basic and key skills.

The co-ordinator provides comprehensive termly reports to the management committee and to the local authority. These reports include data on attainments, attendance and exclusions. There are good arrangements in place to monitor expenditure and evaluate the impact of activities on pupil outcomes.

The management committee provides good support to the Service, but does not always provide sufficient challenge. The composition of the management committee does not fully reflect the multi-agency nature of the provision.

Improving quality: Good

The co-ordinator and the acting deputy have a very good understanding of the strengths of the Service and areas for development.

The self-evaluation report is of good quality. Teaching and support staff are actively involved in the self-evaluation process and in producing the resulting school development plan. Areas for development are identified and prioritised and these are shared with the management committee.

A strong ethos exists where good teamwork leads to a shared understanding of the priorities and helps to achieve all the actions in the development plan. This ensures continuous improvement, for example by successfully establishing a wide range of vocational courses and experiences for the pupils. These prepare them well for the world of work and enable them to access college courses. The Service has successfully met all the recommendations from the last inspection.

Staff collate and analyse data effectively and rigorously. They use the information gathered to inform planning and secure pupil improvement.

Leaders and other staff are involved in a network of professional learning communities with other specialist provision as well as mainstream schools. These links contribute positively towards increasing pupils' self esteem, increase their motivation and successfully raise standards and improve pupil outcomes.

Partnership working: Good

There are effective links with a wide range of partners. These partnerships enhance significantly the opportunities and outcomes for pupils and are a strength of the Service.

The Service liaises well with parents and carers. Staff communicate with parents very frequently, ensuring they are fully informed as to their child's progress.

Strategic partnerships and joint planning with local colleges significantly improve the range of provision for pupils and increase opportunities for qualifications. The effective partnership with other schools and work-based training providers enhances the Learning Pathways14-19 provision very well. This is particularly notable in relation to providing suitable vocational courses such as catering, car maintenance and construction. The Service works closely with Careers Wales enabling pupils to progress to further education, training or employment.

There are good opportunities for work experience through well-established links within the local community. These placements provide pupils with valuable experiences of the world of work and frequently contribute towards many pupils gaining external qualifications.

Partnerships with support agencies such as the youth justice, police and health services have a beneficial impact on pupils' wellbeing.

Resource management: Good

The co-ordinator and the acting deputy manage and deploy staff and resources well. This helps create a positive learning environment and support teaching and learning effectively.

The accommodation is used well to make the best use of the space and facilities. Non-teaching and administrative staff contribute well to the smooth running of the Service.

The Service makes effective use of staff expertise and teachers manage their time well. Teachers make good use of planning, preparation and assessment time. This helps to ensure that pupils' individual needs are met and that there are high standards in teaching and pupil outcomes.

Teaching assistants are used well to support and guide pupils.

The management committee monitor and review the budget and expenditure carefully. Additional grant income has been secured to enhance and maintain the range of resources used by the Service.

In view of the outcomes achieved by the pupils, the Alternative Education Service provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Of the 21 pupils who responded to the questionnaire, most state that they are doing well and that the teachers help them to learn and make progress. Most feel that they have enough books and equipment, including computers, to do their work and that the staff respect them and their backgrounds.

Many pupils feel safe and say that they have someone to talk to if they are worried.

They feel that they are taught how to keep healthy and that there are plenty of opportunities for them to get regular exercise. Many think that homework helps them to understand and improve their work and that other pupils behave well and they can get on with their work.

Many pupils state that staff treat them fairly and with respect and that staff listen to their views and make changes as they suggest. They feel that they are encouraged to do things for themselves and to take responsibility and that they are helped to be ready for their next school or to start working life.

Many pupils feel that staff help them to understand and respect people from other backgrounds and that they received good advice when choosing courses.

A majority of pupils feel that staff deal well any issues of bullying.

Responses to parent questionnaires

All of the 11 questionnaires returned are positive.

All parents state that they are satisfied with the Service, and feel that their child is safe and was helped to settle in well. They all feel that their children are making good progress and that they like the Service.

All of the parents feel that that teaching is good and that staff expect their child to work hard and do the best they can. They all state that homework builds well on what has been learnt and that staff treat all pupils fairly and with respect.

They all feel that pupils receive appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs and that they are kept well informed of their child's progress. They feel comfortable in approaching staff with questions, suggestions or a problem and state that the Service is well run.

Most feel that their child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise. They understand the Service's procedure for dealing with complaints and that their child is helped well to move on to the next school or college or work, and to become more mature.

Most state that that there is a good range of activities, including trips or visits, offered to the pupils. Many believe that pupils behave well.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

William Griffiths	Reporting Inspector
Linda Williams	Team Inspector
Pauline Preston	Team Inspector
James Jones	Lay Inspector
Peter Owen	Peer Inspector
Andrew Hails	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

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, PRUs, management committees, parents and local authorities.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 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	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	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:

Foundation Phase	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