



**Annual monitoring inspection report on:**

**Headlands School**

**Date of inspection: October 2013**

**by**

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

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

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

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

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**Publication date: 16/01/2014**

## Context

Headlands School is an independent special school, situated in a residential area of Penarth in the Vale of Glamorgan. It is part of the Action for Children charity. The school provides day and termly residential placements for pupils with very challenging behaviour and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school educates 57 pupils from key stage 2 to post-16.

Pupils come predominantly from Welsh authorities and a few pupils from English authorities. Fourteen pupils have termly residential places. Nearly all pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) and 21 pupils have 'looked-after child' (LAC) status. All pupils have additional learning needs, which include attention deficit hyperactivity disorders and autistic spectrum disorders.

Recent appointments include a second English teacher, hospitality and catering tutor, two higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) and a part time information and communication technology (ICT) technician. The headteacher has introduced a new leadership structure to support the implementation of the literacy and numeracy framework and the further development of the wellbeing curriculum.

Recent curriculum changes include extending the thematic approach in key stage 2 into key stage 3 and increasing the range of vocational opportunities and accreditation for pupils in key stage 4 and key stage 5. The creation of new facilities, which include hospitality and catering and bicycle maintenance workshops, has enabled the school to develop new partnerships with local and national businesses.

## Main findings

### Strengths

The school's strengths are that:

- the school has made good progress in addressing the recommendations of the 2012 inspection;
- pupils achieve good standards in their learning;
- pupils make very good progress with their behaviour and social skills;
- teachers and teaching assistants work effectively as a team;
- the leadership teams focus well on school improvement;
- the school has established a culture of sharing good practice which is impacting positively on teaching and learning; and
- senior leaders are realistic and honest. They know the school's strengths and prioritise areas for development well.

### Areas for development

The school's area for development is that:

- although it has made progress in addressing all of the recommendations from the previous inspection, work relating to three of the recommendations is at an early stage.

### Recommendations

R1 Further develop a coherent anti-bullying strategy to address the perceptions of a minority of pupils that staff do not always intervene quickly enough when behaviour is likely to escalate into bullying

R2 Identify excellent teaching at Headlands, and in other schools, and share this practice with staff

R3 Make sure that older pupils are given detailed written feedback on what they need to do to improve their work

R4 Continue to strengthen the involvement of the governing body in the self-evaluation process

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

### **Recommendation 1: Address the minority of pupils' perceptions that staff do not always intervene quickly enough when behaviour is likely to escalate into bullying**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has strengthened the role of peer mentors and has provided them with appropriate accredited external training to develop their skills and understanding of issues related to bullying. External bespoke training has also been provided for staff.

The school has established a leadership team that has taken the responsibility for the co-ordination of a coherent anti-bullying strategy across the school. This has included working with members of the school council to develop a child-friendly anti-bullying policy.

Tutorial sessions are now prioritised to raise bullying issues and how pupils can keep themselves safe, make friends, and learn about the impact of their behaviours on themselves and on others.

It is too early to see the impact that these approaches are having on addressing the minority of pupils' perceptions that staff do not always intervene quickly enough when behaviour is likely to escalate into bullying.

### **Recommendation 2: Ensure that, where teaching is excellent, teachers share their good practice across the school**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school's 'good to excellent' leadership team has identified and provided guidance to all staff on common features of good lessons at Headlands. These include starter activities linked closely to learning objectives and effective use of teaching assistants in supporting learning.

Members of the team have visited maintained special schools and mainstream secondary and primary schools to develop further their knowledge of good teaching practice. These visits have informed the approaches that have been adopted at the school. They have carried out internal observations and identified good and excellent teaching strategies across the school. These have been shared with staff and have become part of the induction programme for newly-appointed staff.

Structured peer observations take place and the 'good to excellent' leadership team analyses the strengths and areas for development.

It is too early to measure the full impact of the work of the 'good to excellent' leadership team.

**Recommendation 3: Make sure that marking always helps pupils to know what they need to do to improve their work**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school's marking policy has been revised and appropriate training has been provided for staff. Members of the senior leadership team have sampled marking and written feedback given to pupils. They have analysed the main findings and identified consistent practices across key stages 2 and 3. However, practices are not consistent enough for older pupils.

The school needs to make sure that older pupils are given detailed written feedback on how they can improve their work.

**Recommendation 4: Ensure that all work sheets are age appropriate**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The senior leadership team has focused on differentiated planning and appropriate use of age appropriate resources and worksheets during lesson observations. Outcomes from the observations and scrutiny of pupils' work show that this recommendation has been fully addressed.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen the involvement of the governing body in the self-evaluation process**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has developed appropriate strategies to ensure that governors are more fully involved in the self-evaluation process. Governors have recently agreed to a policy that outlines their increasing involvement over time. Their roles are clearly linked to the targets within the school improvement plan and to working towards meeting local and national priorities.

It is too early to measure the impact of their involvement in the self-evaluation process.

**Recommendation 6: Further develop the school improvement plan as a detailed and comprehensive document**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Following the last inspection the school improvement plan has been appropriately amended. It focuses well on improving pupils' standards and developing their literacy, numeracy, ICT and emotional and social skills. In addition the school has produced a detailed and useful three-year work schedule. This captures effectively the actions to be achieved within a set time scale for each of the targets in the school improvement plan.

## **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 the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **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

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|---|--|
| <b>School</b>   | Headlands School   |
| <b>School number</b>  | 673/6025   |
| <b>Purpose of visit</b>   | Post S163 monitoring inspection  |
| <b>Date of visit</b>  | 23 and 24 October 2013   |
| <b>Proprietor</b>   | Action for Children  |
| <b>Staff</b>  | 13 full time teachers with qualified teacher status (QTS)<br>1 part time teacher with QTS<br>1 tutor<br>1 part time ICT technician<br>4 higher level teaching assistants (HLTA)<br>20 teaching assistants<br>26 care staff |
| <b>Number of pupils</b>   | 57 pupils (51 boys and 6 girls)  |
| <b>Provision</b>  | Day and 38 week termly residential provision   |
| <b>Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school</b> | The school has special educational needs (SEN) approval to admit pupils with statements for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). The school has approval to educate pupils from key stage 2 to post-16.  |
| <b>Last Section 163 inspection</b>                                      | October 2012   |
| <b>Last annual monitoring inspection</b>                                | January 2012   |
| <b>Last CSSIW inspection</b>  | 17 January 2013  |

## Team information

|                            |                |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Reporting Inspector</b> | Meinir Rees AI |
| <b>Team Inspector</b>      | Huw Davies HMI |