



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

**Annual monitoring inspection report on
The Potteries**

Date of inspection: September 2018

by

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

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Context

The Potteries is a registered independent school, which opened in July 2013. The classroom is in a large house in Abermule near Newtown, which is also a children's home. The Potteries is an assessment centre; pupils attend a 26-week programme at the school before moving on to long-term placements.

There are currently four male pupils, aged 11-13, on the school roll. All four pupils have looked after child (LAC) status, two of which have a statement of special educational needs (SEN). The primary identified need is social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. All pupils are from English local authorities.

The current headteacher has been in post since 2012. There are 27 support staff across care and education, which includes two managers, one teacher who is also the headteacher, and one member of staff who assesses the therapeutic needs of pupils.

The school's most recent inspection was in November 2017.

Main findings

Strengths

Most pupils improve their behaviour during their time at the school and make a successful transition to suitable long-term placements. Many pupils' standards in literacy and numeracy improve in line with their abilities from their baseline assessments.

Nearly all pupils develop more positive attitudes to learning. They discuss their learning and what they find helpful during lessons with confidence.

The headteacher plans clear and detailed lessons for on and off-site activities. Lessons are engaging and are based on a combination of the pupils' interests and detailed assessment information. The school plans well for the development of literacy and numeracy skills during off-site activities.

The school has effective systems to track and monitor pupil progress throughout the 26-week programme. The improved focus on literacy has further contributed to this process. Support staff deliver effective lesson plans, which they evaluate with the headteacher daily. Pupils have half-termly feedback meetings during which pupils share their ideas and reflect on their involvement in the school and care home. Pupil feedback is very positive about these meetings.

The headteacher provides clear leadership and direction at the school. The close collaboration between the headteacher and support staff in planning lessons is a strength of the school. Information from relevant therapeutic assessments contributes positively to providing pupils with suitable curriculum pathways.

The school has made strong progress in implementing its post-inspection action plan from the core inspection of November 2017.

Areas for development

The headteacher informed inspectors during the visit that the school intends to increase the classroom facilities on the current site with two additional teaching areas. The material change may also include an increase in pupil numbers from four to six.

The school focuses well on improving pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum. However, the school does not evaluate the impact of these actions well enough. As a result, it does not have a clear understanding of what it needs to do to ensure that the school continues to improve in this area.

Recommendations

R1 Approach the Welsh Government to request a material change at the Potteries school

R2 Evaluate the impact of actions to improve literacy across the curriculum to identify priorities for future improvement

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

Recommendation 1: Improve the coordination and tracking of literacy across the curriculum

The headteacher has implemented a number of suitable key actions to address this recommendation since November 2017.

Individual learning plans (ILPs) and individual target summary sheets contain appropriate literacy targets for all pupils. Pupil target summary sheets support appropriately the focus on literacy skills across the school day, including off-site activities. Staff record pupil progress against the target information and share this in daily meetings with the headteacher to inform pupils' ILPs. The use of lesson plans and literacy targets, particularly for off-site activities, has impacted positively on pupils' literacy standards.

The school has purchased and implemented an effective online digital software programme. Pupils have access to online assessment and the tracking of their own literacy and numeracy skills. This helps them to understand the progress they are making.

The improved tracking and recording of pupils' literacy progress is improving the standards of functional literacy for most pupils at the school. Staff have a more focused approach to literacy skills across all activities and provide good role models for pupils. Educational reports provide accurate and specific information on pupils' literacy standards across class-based and off-site activities.

Recommendation 2: Increase opportunities for staff to share and learn from good practice

The school has a suitable training programme in place for all staff to support their professional development. The assistant psychologist for the school provides support and training for all staff on topics such as attachment disorder and the use of the trauma recovery model. The headteacher has introduced education liaison roles for support staff to ensure effective pupil information sharing between the residential setting and school. The education liaison role is developing well, and positively supports the internal sharing of good practice. An example of this is the support that education liaison staff provide for newly appointed staff, providing induction information and modelling effective strategies for working with pupils.

Four support staff have made visits to two other schools in the organisation to observe practice. This enabled staff to compare their current practice with their observations at the two schools. Staff shared their experiences from the visits highlighting good practice observed with their colleagues. However, there was little opportunity during the visits for The Potteries staff to share practical experiences in more detail with their colleagues.

During the last inspection there were several aspects of effective practice identified by inspectors. To date the company has not taken full advantage of this effective practice to share it with other schools across their company.

Recommendation 3: Improve facilities on site for pupils to play and learn outside the classroom

Since the core inspection, leaders have made important changes to the curriculum and the on-site play facilities.

Pupils now have access to an area in the grounds to play football, basketball and to use the trampoline. Pupils also benefit from fishing at the local canal, which borders the school site.

The school has improved the provision of outdoor education. The timetable now includes sessions each Monday for pupils to take part in a wide range of physical challenges in the local countryside. These include rock-climbing, canoeing and hill walking.

Leaders have reduced the amount of time that pupils spend travelling to and from learning activities. For example, a staff member now provides therapeutic assessments for pupils at the school site. Previously therapeutic assessments were only available to pupils if they travelled to one of the two other schools owned by the company. The on-site access has also increased the time staff have to liaise more effectively with the member of staff who delivers the therapeutic assessments for pupils.

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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 2.

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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 4.

Standard 5: Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 5.

Standard 6: The provision of information

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

Standard 7: The manner in which complaints are to be handled

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 7.

Recommendation regarding registration

When considering this school's registration the National Assembly for Wales may wish to have regard to the following recommendation:

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Inspectors' judgements on this annual monitoring inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.

School information

School	The Potteries
School number	6666051
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	10/09/2018
Proprietor	CareTech UK
Staff	1 teacher who is also the headteacher, 27 support staff across care and education including 2 managers, 1 member of staff who provides therapeutic assessments.
Number of pupils	4
Provision	Up to 26-week residential placements
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school	Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
Last Section 163 inspection	16/11/2017
Last annual monitoring inspection	31/10/2016
Last CSSIW inspection	01/09/2017