



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

A report on

Options Kinsale School

Date of inspection: September 2019

by

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

About Options Kinsale School

Options Kinsale School opened in 2007. The school is part of the Outcomes First group, which seeks to provide integrated education and residential services for young people and adults with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), moderate and severe learning difficulties and social and emotional difficulties.

Options Kinsale School offers residential education and care for up to 30 pupils aged between 8 and 19 years who have complex needs and a diagnosis of ASD. The school currently has 21 pupils on roll. Local authorities in Wales and England place pupils at the school. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan (EHCP). Most pupils have looked-after child (LAC) status and many reside in the company's children's homes. A very few pupils attending the school are day pupils. Many pupils are from English-speaking backgrounds.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2017. An education team that consists of five class teachers, two part-time tutors, and ten learning support assistants supports the headteacher. Since the core inspection in September 2018, and in the immediate period following this monitoring visit, there have been several key staff changes to the school and clinical team, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

Main findings

Strengths

The school provides a nurturing and caring environment. Staff make effective use of daily routines, which provide structure and help to reduce pupils' anxieties and displays of challenging behaviour. As a result, many pupils show increased engagement in learning and make suitable progress.

Weekly meetings involving all school staff improve the planning for pupils' learning experiences. In addition, learning support assistants are beginning to be involved in the planning and delivery of the curriculum for individual pupils. They contribute appropriately to the monitoring of pupils' involvement in learning activities.

The school is beginning to develop the learning environment for pupils with more complex sensory and behavioural needs. This learning environment supports staff to deliver a more appropriate individualised curriculum for each pupil. However, this is a recent development and it is too early to assess the impact fully.

Areas for development

The school does not meet the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Overall, the school has made slow progress in addressing the recommendations from the last core inspection. Therefore the previous recommendations from September 2018 remain.

There have been significant staffing changes across the school and clinical team. This is a contributing factor to the slow rate of progress in meeting the recommendations from the core inspection.

Recommendations

The school should:

R1. Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003

R2. Implement effective systems to track pupils' progress in learning across a wider range of skills

R3. Improve the quality of teachers' long-term planning across the curriculum

R4. Ensure that learning support staff have the training and skills they need to fulfil their roles effectively

R5. strengthen processes for quality assurance, self-evaluation and improvement planning

R6. Secure leadership and staffing arrangements at the school

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

Recommendation 1: Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003

The school does not fully comply with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 inspected during this visit.

The school does not comply with standard 1, **the quality of education provided by the school**, specifically 1(2) of this standard. A revised curriculum policy is in place, supported by appropriate schemes of work. However, it is too early to evaluate the effective implementation of these recently introduced plans.

Recommendation 2: Implement effective systems to track pupils' progress in learning across a wider range of skills

The school has very recently established an internal quality assurance group and is developing links with special schools across the region. The purpose of this activity is to develop confidence in tracking and making secure judgements on pupil progress.

The recently introduced tracking system includes individual pupil targets for literacy, numeracy and personal and social education. In addition, and where appropriate, monitoring the progress of pupils' motor skills is in place. However, the tracking of targets and pupil progress are not always aligned well enough to the specific recommendations of the clinical staff. In many cases, the recommendations of clinical staff are not current.

This aspect of the school's work is in the very early stages.

Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teachers' long-term planning across the curriculum

The school is developing its long-term planning and schemes of work appropriately. These link to the seven areas of the curriculum and the three development curriculum pathways in the school curriculum policy.

Each of the teaching groups has an individual timetable and for each pupil there are identified outcomes linked to their specific needs and the work for the term. This approach was introduced in September 2019. It is too early to assess the impact of this approach to planning and schemes of work on teaching and pupil progress.

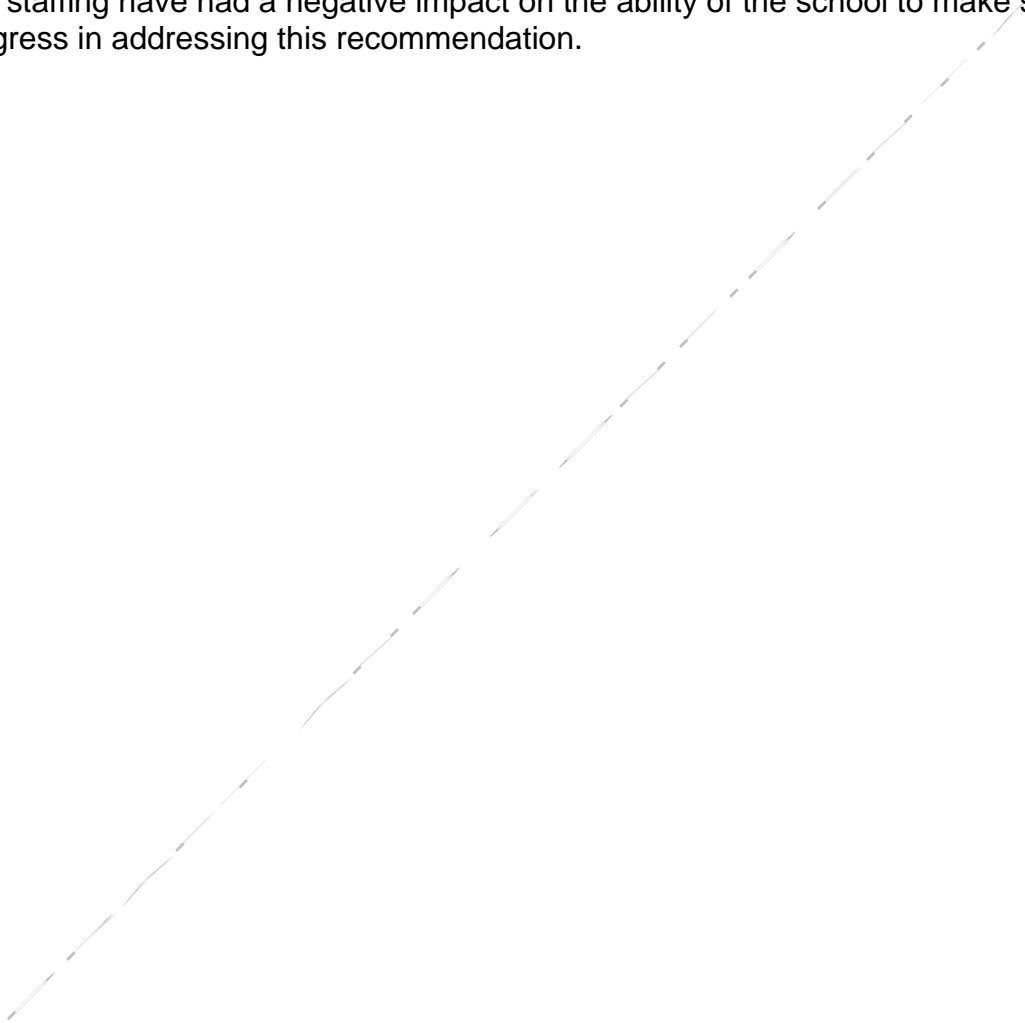
Recommendation 4: Ensure that learning support staff have the training and skills they need to fulfil their roles effectively

All learning support assistants have access to regular and relevant training and development opportunities provided by the school. For example, staff recently attended a six-week speech and signing programme. A regular schedule of weekly meetings between teachers and learning support staff is in place. This provides

opportunities for worthwhile discussion about pupils' learning and behaviour and supports joint planning of appropriate learning experiences. However, staff turnover has reduced the impact of this training.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen processes for quality assurance, self-evaluation and improvement planning

The school has recently introduced processes to strengthen quality assurance, self-evaluation, and improvement planning. The company has secured the services of an external consultant who is supporting the headteacher and the school in developing their knowledge and understanding of school self-evaluation processes, for example, by holding weekly quality assurance staff meetings. However, changes in leadership and staffing have had a negative impact on the ability of the school to make sufficient progress in addressing this recommendation.



Compliance with the standards for registration

Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school

The school does not fully meet the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school should:

- Ensure the curriculum policy is supported by effective schemes of work, and they are implemented effectively [1(2)].

Standard 2: The spiritual, moral, 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 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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 6.

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 Welsh Government may wish to have regard to the following recommendation:

The school does not currently meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. To comply fully with these requirements, the school should address the issues identified above for each standard.

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

Copies of the report

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

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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2019: 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: 25/11/2019