



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

A report on

Priory Talocher School

Date of inspection: January 2019

by

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

About Priory Talocher School

Priory Talocher is an independent special school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and associated needs. It is located on the outskirts of Monmouth, and is administered by Priory Education Services, which has over 30 schools and specialist colleges across England and Wales.

The school is registered for up to 55 pupils aged 7 to 19 years. There are currently 44 pupils on roll, each of whom has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Fourteen pupils are looked after by their local authority.

The school was last inspected in June 2013.

Main findings

Strengths

Staff and pupils at the school have particularly positive working relationships. Staff know their pupils and their learning and behavioural needs well. They use this information beneficially to plan lessons and devise resources and different activities to engage pupils, maintain their interest and enhance their progress.

The school is strengthening its procedures for target-setting and monitoring and tracking pupils' progress. A valuable range of performance data is collected and used suitably to monitor pupil progress and plan timely interventions. This work is ongoing.

The headteacher and senior leaders are taking appropriate steps to refine improvement planning processes to provide the school with clearer strategic direction. These steps include revising the focus for target-setting in the staff appraisal system and in pupils' individual education plans.

Areas for development

Although the school has introduced regular standardised assessments to monitor the progress that the majority of pupils make in developing their reading skills, a minority of pupils have not completed an initial reading assessment. This makes it very difficult to identify appropriate support for these pupils and to monitor their progress.

Since the last annual monitoring visit, the school has introduced a range of new systems and processes to support pupils' learning and personal development better. Although much of this provision is at an early stage of development, planning for timely evaluation is not always identified in the relevant action points of the school's development plan.

Recommendations

The school should:

R1. Further improve the assessment of pupils' literacy skills

R2. Ensure all new developments are evaluated effectively

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

Recommendation 1: Make sure the impact of reading programmes is monitored and evaluated to inform improvement planning

Since the last annual monitoring visit, the school has strengthened its processes to ensure that reading programmes are monitored effectively to inform improvement planning. For example, the school has purchased a commercial reading scheme and assessment tool to provide reliable standardised information on progress over time. This information is generally used suitably to provide discrete literacy intervention and support sessions, which are co-ordinated across the school to ensure consistency of approach. However, a minority of pupils have not completed a baseline reading assessment.

Recommendation 2: Implement a manageable system for recording serious incidents and additional measures of control

The school has introduced new management information systems to track and monitor pupils' progress in lessons and their behaviour within and beyond the classroom. A revised reward system has been launched across the school, with points recorded electronically in a manageable way. Pupils respond positively to staff sharing their daily information about their attitudes to learning and behavioural progress, and they often use this information to self-regulate and make improvements. Senior leaders and teaching staff make effective use of this information to monitor whole-school and individual pupil progress, and to plan interventions and support, where appropriate.

Coupled with the reward system, the school is currently piloting a new pupil database which brings together all data about pupils including the systems for recording pupils' progress in lessons and records of serious incidents. However, it is not possible to evaluate the impact of this new development.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that literacy and numeracy targets on IEPs are short, measurable and specific to the individual pupil

The school has strengthened its systems to set individual education plan (IEP) targets for pupils. Staff make effective use of the new online systems to record, share and track progress and other key information on pupils' IEPs.

Each pupil's IEP now has small, measurable targets in four areas of learning, behaviour and other life and social skills. These targets are specific to each pupil and they work on these with their class teachers, support staff and parents or carers. This system is a recent development and it is too early to evaluate its impact.

Recommendation 4: Ensure that literacy and numeracy targets for older pupils are shared effectively to ensure a consistent approach to pupils' skills development across the curriculum

The school has developed suitable systems to ensure a more consistent approach to sharing literacy and numeracy targets for older pupils across the school. These systems include appointing a learning mentor with specific responsibility for liaising regularly with the staff of older pupils on the outcomes of literacy and numeracy interventions and support sessions. They also include staff from education, care and the therapeutic teams meeting weekly as a multi-disciplinary team to ensure key information is shared, pupils' progress is discussed and next steps are planned suitably.

Recommendation 5: Review the appropriateness of site security locks to make sure staff can move swiftly between areas

The school has taken appropriate actions to address the site security to ensure that all staff can move swiftly between areas. There is now a suitable balance between the fob and single key entry systems to ensure pupils' and staff safety and wellbeing, as well as adequate security of the school site.

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, 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:

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 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

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