



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

A report on

Ty Bronllys

Date of inspection: May 2019

by

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

About Ty Bronllys

Tŷ Bronllys is an independent special school situated just outside Brecon. The school provides residential education and care for up to 13 pupils aged 8 to 19 years who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). The school opened in 2007 and is one of five schools owned by the Orbis Education and Care group in Wales and England.

Currently there are 11 pupils attending the school. Nearly all pupils are male and all are placed by local authorities from Wales. All pupils have a statement of educational needs. Many pupils reside at the registered on-site children's home. Nearly all pupils have English as a first language.

The head of education has been in post since May 2017. A director of children's services oversees the education and care provision across the company's schools. There are two class teachers and seven full-time learning support assistants. The education team is supported by a clinical team including a speech and language therapist, behaviour specialist, occupational therapist and clinical technicians.

The school's last full inspection was in May 2018.

Main findings

Strengths

Pupils at Tŷ Bronllys have significant learning difficulties arising from their autism and speech, language and communication difficulties. In relation to these complex needs, most pupils make good progress in priority areas such as improving their wellbeing, the development of social skills, and in becoming more independent in their daily lives.

In lessons and timetabled sessions, pupils respond positively to the encouragement and skilled interventions of staff. As a result, most pupils sustain their engagement in activities successfully and make strong progress towards their individual learning goals.

Staff know the needs and abilities of pupils well. They share a thorough understanding of the most appropriate means of achieving a positive outcome for all pupils. This knowledge helps them to manage pupils' behaviour calmly and consistently. As a result, pupils feel secure and improve their understanding of their own emotions and behaviours.

The school is in the process of making beneficial improvements to the school buildings and grounds. These improvements are well advanced. The new facilities provide valuable opportunities for the development of pupils' independence and practical skills, for example, through an on-site shop and life skills kitchen.

The school complies with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 inspected on this visit.

Areas for development

The school has begun to implement helpful actions to address the recommendations left at the time of the core inspection. However, much of this work is at an early stage of development and has not had sufficient impact on addressing key areas for improvement. Therefore, the recommendations from the core inspection remain in place.

The company has a strong track record in making improvements to the school. It has robust processes in place to quality assure and evaluate its work. These include regular opportunities to review pupil progress and the quality of teaching through lesson observations and work scrutiny. Leaders draw on a wide range of stakeholders' views to inform self-evaluation. However, it is unclear how these processes inform the school's priorities for improvement. In addition, actions to support these priorities are not precise enough. This means they do not identify clearly what the school needs to do next to achieve its goals.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Develop the range of learning experiences to meet the needs of pupils less tolerant of the classroom environment**
- R2 Ensure the purpose of assessment is clear and identifies precisely what pupils need to do to make progress**
- R3 Provide teaching staff with opportunities for professional development that have a clear focus on teaching and learning**
- R4 Ensure that the outcomes of self-evaluation processes are used robustly to inform improvement planning**

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

Recommendation 1: Develop the range of learning experiences to meet the needs of pupils less tolerant of the classroom environment

The school has taken suitable steps to address this recommendation. Teachers work together closely to plan lessons that are flexible in structure and can be adjusted to different environments around the site. This enables teaching staff to respond swiftly to individual pupils' needs throughout the day, for example by taking the learning to pupils who express a preference to learn in a location other than the designated classroom.

The school has begun to extend the range of activities available within the planned curriculum. For example, it has introduced an on-site barber shop. This provides pupils with worthwhile opportunities to develop their experience of work skills, such as cleaning and sweeping floors. This well-considered initiative benefits pupils further by helping them increase their tolerance of having their own hair cut in a realistic setting.

The school has recently introduced bush craft as part of the timetable which enables pupils to experience interesting activities such as making fires, using tools and building a shelter. However, overall, these initiatives are at an early stage of development. In particular, the school has not developed fully its rationale for these activities or how it intends to capture the progress pupils make through them in relation to their primary learning goals.

Recommendation 2: Ensure the purpose of assessment is clear and identifies precisely what pupils need to do to make progress

Since the core inspection, the school has reviewed its arrangements for the assessment and tracking of pupil progress to ensure these refer to a single assessment framework. This has clarified the school's approach to assessment and has improved the school's understanding of the progress pupils make in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

The school has recently introduced an assessment week at the end of each term. This provides a valuable opportunity for pupils to assess their own progress and contribute to setting their targets for the next term. Lesson planning documents include beneficial opportunities for teachers to record pupils' progress against their learning objectives for each lesson. This approach ensures that teachers capture effectively the small steps of progress pupils make in each lesson to support their future planning.

Teachers have a strong understanding of what pupils need to learn in terms of their primary needs and future goals. However, the quality of targets on pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) is too variable. In a minority of cases, targets and success criteria are not sufficiently purposeful and do not link well enough to pupils' next steps and longer-term goals.

Recommendation 3: Provide teaching staff with opportunities for professional development that have a clear focus on teaching and learning

Overall, the school has responded suitably to this recommendation. There is a clear understanding across the school of how the initial actions will be developed and progressed over time.

The school has improved its engagement with an appropriate variety of providers to form strong supportive partnerships. These partnerships allow staff useful opportunities to observe teaching and learning in settings such as early years and college provision. As a result, teachers have introduced new ideas into their teaching. This includes making better use of learning in settings outside of the classroom and new initiatives to retain learner engagement.

The whole-school professional development plan is in the very early stages of collation and the school is starting to implement a strategic approach to professional development. The new skills gained by teachers have not yet been shared across the school. However, the school has plans in place to ensure important areas of training, such as signing, are a priority for all staff.

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 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 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:

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