



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

A report on:

Genus Education

Date of inspection: February 2016

by

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

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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.

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Context

Genus Education is registered as an independent school to provide in-house education for children aged 11 to 18 resident in the company's children's homes who are not able to access mainstream education. Each home has its own classroom accommodation.

The school initially opened in February 2011 and operated only at the Ynys-y-Bwt site. The company set up a classroom at Knowle House in 2012 and another at Station Cottage in 2013.

The school currently has six pupils on roll. Four of the pupils have statements of special educational needs. All pupils are looked after by local authorities in Wales and speak English as their first language.

A head of education oversees the education across the three sites. The sites share common documents that include school policies, a development plan and arrangements for assessment, planning and delivery of lessons. Each classroom has a full-time teacher.

The head of education is one of the proprietors and has been in post since the school opened.

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Adequate

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- Pupils at key stage 4 gain an appropriate range of qualifications in accredited courses
- Pupils achieve improved personal and social skills as they progress through the school
- Learning experiences are well matched to the needs of pupils
- Nearly all pupils make suitable progress in relation to their needs, abilities and prior attainment
- Teaching is good

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- All staff work very effectively as a team
- Leaders have high expectations and ensure that the school functions effectively
- The school has strong partnerships, which impact positively on the wellbeing and outcomes for pupils

However:

- Many quality assurance activities, such as the tracking of pupil performance data, are in the early stages of development and it is too early to judge their impact on important aspects of provision
- Quality assurance activities do not focus clearly enough on the progress that pupils make and the quality of teaching
- There are insufficient links between self-evaluation and improvement planning

Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The provision of information

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) include specific learning targets showing small steps of progress that can be reviewed effectively
- R2 Ensure that self-evaluation processes focus more clearly on the standards pupils achieve and the quality of teaching
- R3 Improve the processes of self-evaluation to ensure that these link more effectively with school improvement planning and staff development
- R4 Measure the impact of partnership work on learner achievements and outcomes

What happens next?

As this is an independent school, there is no follow-up.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Over time, nearly all pupils make strong progress in relation to their abilities and individual needs. Most pupils take pride in their achievements, and recognise the progress that they make. A majority of pupils make sound progress in achieving the agreed learning targets identified in their individual education plan (IEP).

As programmes are individually tailored, it is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve at the school with national averages or to analyse trends in overall performance over time because of the nature of pupils' learning needs.

There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls.

Most pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the topics that they study and are able to recall information that they have learned in previous lessons. Nearly all pupils make strong progress in developing their communication skills. Most listen well, ask appropriate questions and answer confidently, giving reasons for their opinions.

Most pupils improve their reading skills and a few develop the confidence to read aloud in class. Most pupils make effective use of these skills to research information and analyse text. The very few pupils who are less confident readers learn to recognise high frequency words, develop basic phonic skills and decode words that are new to them.

A majority of pupils produce extended writing that is organised well into paragraphs. They make use of a suitable range of general and subject specific vocabulary. Most pupils at key stage 4 develop independent writing skills appropriate for their age and ability. More able pupils write for a wide range of purposes and audiences. They present their ideas clearly and use punctuation and spelling accurately. However, a very few pupils rarely write at length. They do not take enough care over their written work and do not correct basic mistakes.

Most pupils develop their numeracy skills well during mathematics lessons. They select appropriate methods for calculation and apply these successfully in line with their age and ability. Most use a range of measuring skills. However, only a few pupils apply these skills appropriately in other areas of the curriculum.

Most pupils use information and communication technology effectively to present work neatly and research information for topic work.

Many pupils use incidental Welsh confidently and build on a small range of phrases to increase their vocabulary. Pupils gain a good understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales. A very few pupils achieve a GCSE pass in Welsh as a second language.

Over the last three years, all school leavers have achieved one or more qualifications in accredited courses that are well matched to their individual needs and abilities. These include GCSE mathematics, English, Welsh second language, health and social care and art. A very few more able pupils achieve a range of higher-level GCSE passes.

Over time, most pupils develop their thinking skills and problem-solving skills well. They successfully gain the skills that they need to increase their independence, improve their work and contribute effectively to the wider life of the school and the community. This prepares them well to move on to further learning or employment. As a result, over the last three years, all leavers have moved on to employment, training or courses in further education colleges.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils at Genus Education have a range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They start at the school with little confidence, have difficulty controlling their behaviour, and have a history of poor attendance and breakdowns of previous education placements.

Nearly all pupils develop the skills they need to manage their own behaviour well. As a result, there have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions for the past three years. Most pupils are polite and courteous, showing respect to each other, their teachers and support staff.

Due to the high level of support and encouragement that they receive from staff, most pupils make steady progress in developing their confidence and attendance. The average attendance rate over the last three years is 92.1%. Attendance levels for most pupils show an improvement on their attendance prior to joining the school.

Most pupils feel safe at school and nearly all pupils feel that the school deals well with bullying. They all know who to talk to if they have a problem or concern.

Many pupils have a very positive attitude to learning. They take pride in their achievements and work hard to improve. In lessons, most pupils settle quickly and concentrate well. Many pupils take part in valuable after school activities. They learn to take responsibility for specific projects, for example making garden furniture from recycled materials and caring for school pets.

All pupils have regular opportunities to express opinions and take part in making decisions. For example, they choose activities for the after school clubs and take an active part in the work of the eco committee.

Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of healthy eating. They have reviewed the lunchtime menus to ensure that there are healthy options available each day. Pupils preparing for independent living learn to plan healthy meals, shop for ingredients and cook their own meals. All pupils take part in regular physical activities, for example swimming, basketball and athletics.

Pupils improve their social skills and learn to interact appropriately with members of the wider community through taking part in fundraising events for local charities. Older pupils develop valuable work related skills from well-planned work experience placements with local businesses and training providers.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

The school provides a wide range of learning experiences, which meet the needs and interests of the pupils well. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. At key stage 4, all pupils have the opportunity to gain recognised qualifications in a range of subjects including Entry Level Pathways and GCSEs.

The school offers highly individualised timetables at key stage 4, which include a good range of vocational options to enhance pupils' learning experiences. These include regular work placements at local businesses such as a veterinary surgery, care home and placements with training providers. These experiences support pupils effectively in developing their personal and social skills. They prepare them well for the next stage of learning.

The school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in most lessons. The school has recently started to use the national literacy and numeracy framework when planning lessons. However, planning for the development of these skills across the curriculum is at a very early stage and it is too early to judge the impact of this development on pupils' standards.

Teachers and residential care workers provide a useful range of practical extra-curricular activities in the weekly after school clubs. For example, pupils have made a periodic table out of salvaged glass and a pergola on the front of one of the sites. These activities cater well for the pupils' interests and abilities and support their learning in a less formal environment. The after school clubs and the eco committee offer a range of beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship.

Teaching: Good

All teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They develop effective working relationships with pupils, often in a very short period.

Teachers know their pupils well and have a good understanding of their individual needs. As a result, teachers plan lessons with suitable pace and challenge. They share clear learning objectives with pupils and revisit them regularly throughout the lesson. In nearly all lessons, teachers employ a wide range of strategies and resources that are well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils. In the majority of lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to develop pupils' learning and reinforce their understanding.

Teachers use praise and positive reinforcement appropriately to encourage and motivate pupils. As a result, nearly all pupils remain on task in lessons and present work of a good standard. Teachers and support staff work well together to manage any incidents of challenging behaviour. This enables pupils to re-engage in their learning as soon as appropriate.

The school has a clear marking policy, which teachers apply consistently. They mark work regularly and include comments that are generally positive and encouraging. However, in a few instances, comments are over-generous and do not always help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work.

The school has recently introduced new assessment and tracking procedures to improve the monitoring of pupil progress over time. Teachers use the results of these assessments well when planning lessons and share relevant information on pupil progress with colleagues. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of these new procedures on the quality of teaching and pupil progress.

Teachers produce informative termly reports for parents and carers. These provide useful information on attendance, behaviour, pupil progress and attainment. They also set appropriate targets for improvement for the next term.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has effective policies and strategies for promoting care, support and guidance, which make a strong contribution to pupils' wellbeing.

The school promotes the benefits of healthy living effectively through a wide range of activities that link well to pupils' interests and targets for personal development. These include appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking and many opportunities for pupils to exercise.

The school's innovative personal and social education programme provides pupils with valuable information about global citizenship, sex and relationships education, health education and substance misuse. The programme helps pupils develop their self-esteem, self-awareness and positive attitudes towards their own and other cultures.

Pupils benefit from a highly individualised and supportive induction and assessment process. This enables staff to create learning and support programmes tailored to pupils' individual needs. As a result, most new pupils settle quickly and make good progress.

The school has developed strong partnerships with external agencies such as social services and a psychology service who give useful support and advice to staff about individual pupil needs. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to find out about different career choices at key stage 4.

The school has strategies that are successful in promoting good behaviour. These include a range of rewards and sanctions that pupils understand well.

There are effective strategies and plans for meeting pupils' additional learning needs. All pupils have an individual education plan that provides relevant information on their learning needs. Teachers share these plans well with the residential care team. As a result, the residential care workers provide valuable support for pupils in class and in their homes. However, a few IEP targets lack sufficient detail. As a result, staff are not always able to track pupil progress in meeting these targets.

Staff carry out comprehensive risk assessments that are updated regularly. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The school provides a relaxed and nurturing environment. It is caring, supportive and inclusive. Despite the school being based across three sites, all pupils have equal access to the curriculum.

There are clear policies in relation to discrimination and equality and an up-to-date anti-bullying policy.

The 'It's Our World' scheme provides very useful opportunities for pupils to become more self-aware and understand the needs of others. For example, pupils learn about disability rights and different cultures.

The school buildings are secure, well maintained and welcoming. Classrooms are clean, tidy and well resourced to meet the learning needs of each pupil. These include high quality digital learning resources such as computer tablets and touch screen televisions. Pupils use these with increasing confidence. Good quality wall displays enhance the learning environment. They are informative and attractive and celebrate pupils' achievements well.

Outdoor spaces provide useful opportunities for pupils to develop their learning, through growing herbs, participating in sports and looking after school pets.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Adequate
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Leadership: Adequate

The school has a mission statement that clearly sets out its overall vision. There are a range of policies and plans in place that are appropriate to meeting the needs of the pupils.

The head of education provides effective leadership for the day-to-day running of the school. Staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and staff work together effectively to support the needs of pupils. Leaders have recently strengthened the management of assessment processes across the three sites through creating the role of assessment co-ordinator. However, it is too early to judge the impact of the position.

The head of education meets with teaching staff on a regular basis. These meetings provide useful opportunities for staff to discuss the curriculum and resources, and assist in developing a more consistent approach across the sites. However, progress against agreed actions is not monitored well enough in subsequent meetings.

The head of education receives weekly updates on the progress that pupils make in relation to their IEP targets, attendance and behaviour. The head of education uses this information well to ensure a consistent approach to meeting the pupils' needs across the care and education settings.

The two proprietors have operational management responsibilities for the day-to-day running of the business. One of the proprietors is also the head of education. The proprietors carry out their roles well and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Improving quality: Adequate

The head of education and teaching staff undertake termly internal quality assurance visits to the different sites that focus on a broad range of activities. However, generally, these visits focus too much on compliance with procedures and not enough attention is given to the progress that pupils make in their work and the quality of teaching. In addition, managers do not use the main findings from these visits to share best practice across the school sites.

The school is beginning to make use of individual pupil data in its self-evaluation. However, there is no whole-school analysis of data and the school does not evaluate the work of the school well enough. The self-evaluation report is thorough but largely descriptive.

As part of the self-evaluation process, all staff complete a questionnaire on the quality of education provided. However, the involvement of wider stakeholders such as pupils and parents in the self-evaluation process is underdeveloped.

The school self-evaluation process has identified 19 areas for development. Six of these have been included in the school improvement plan. However, there are too many work streams under each of the six improvement objectives. The actions set out in these work streams do not always link as well as they could to the overall objectives and, on too many occasions, improvement objectives are routine in nature. It is not clear therefore how the school prioritises those aspects of its work that it wishes to improve.

The school has made good progress in addressing recommendations from previous inspection visits.

Partnership working: Good

The school works well with important stakeholders including placing authorities and social services to ensure a consistent approach to pupils' education and care. This helps pupils settle well and has a beneficial impact on their wellbeing.

The partnership between the school and parents and carers is strong. Parents and carers are generally positive about their child's learning experiences and most feel their child is making good progress. The school has made significant and successful links with colleges and local mainstream schools. As a result, a few pupils reintegrate back into mainstream education and all those who leave statutory education transfer successfully to further education or training.

The school has recently formed a range of useful partnerships with other schools to learn and share good practice. This includes leading on a network of professional practice with other independent special schools.

The school has developed effective links with work experience providers. These provide valuable opportunities for pupils to gain worthwhile work related skills and experience, for example in the local retail sector and veterinary practices. However, the school does not monitor the quality of these placements and their impact on pupil achievements and outcomes well enough.

Resource management: Good

All teaching staff are suitably qualified and hold post-graduate certificates in special educational needs. The school deploys teachers and support staff appropriately to deliver the curriculum at each of the school sites. They work very well together to support the educational and emotional needs of all pupils.

Teachers routinely observe their colleagues teaching. This has proved useful as staff identify one another's strengths and areas for improvement and share subject expertise well. Teachers receive appropriate planning, preparation and assessment time.

All teachers attend relevant training in relation to child protection and behaviour management. However, opportunities for teachers to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of curriculum areas are underdeveloped.

All teachers have a budget and this is used to good effect in purchasing resources and materials that are relevant to the curriculum. These spending decisions generally link well to improvement priorities.

Overall, the standards that pupils achieve and the provision made are good. Genus Education provides value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Responses to parent questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the school.	11	7 64%	4 36%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r ysgol yn gyffredinol.
		65%	31%	0%	4%		
My child likes this school.	11	5 45%	6 55%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn hoffi'r ysgol hon.
		70%	26%	4%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the school.	11	9 82%	2 18%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn yr ysgol.
		77%	19%	0%	4%		
My child is making good progress at school.	11	6 55%	5 45%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn yr ysgol.
		60%	32%	4%	4%		
Pupils behave well in school.	10	4 40%	5 50%	1 10%	0 0%	1	Mae disgyblion yn ymddwyn yn dda yn yr ysgol.
		57%	40%	2%	0%		
Teaching is good.	11	6 55%	5 45%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		65%	30%	0%	4%		
Staff expect my child to work hard and do his or her best.	11	8 73%	3 27%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn disgwyl i fy mhentyn weithio'n galed ac i wneud ei orau.
		72%	23%	4%	0%		
The homework that is given builds well on what my child learns in school.	10	8 80%	1 10%	1 10%	0 0%	1	Mae'r gwaith cartref sy'n cael ei roi yn adeiladu'n dda ar yr hyn mae fy mhentyn yn ei ddysgu yn yr ysgol.
		56%	29%	6%	9%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	11	9 82%	2 18%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		76%	24%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	11	8 73%	3 27%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Caiff fy mhentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		70%	25%	5%	0%		

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
My child is safe at school.	11	10 91%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn yr ysgol.
		79%	15%	6%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs'.	11	8 73%	3 27%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		71%	25%	4%	0%		
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	11	8 73%	3 27%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		58%	27%	10%	4%		
I feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem.	11	8 73%	3 27%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n esmwyth ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r ysgol, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		71%	25%	0%	4%		
I understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.	10	7 70%	3 30%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n deall trefn yr ysgol ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		59%	35%	4%	2%		
The school helps my child to become more mature and take on responsibility.	11	9 82%	1 9%	1 9%	0 0%	0	Mae'r ysgol yn helpu fy mhlentyn i ddod yn fwy aeddfed ac i ysgwyddo cyfrifoldeb.
		71%	21%	2%	5%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to the next school or college or work.	10	6 60%	3 30%	1 10%	0 0%	1	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol nesaf neu goleg neu waith.
		56%	26%	10%	8%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	11	8 73%	2 18%	1 9%	0 0%	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		62%	32%	2%	4%		
The school is well run.	11	9 82%	2 18%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r ysgol yn cael ei rhedeg yn dda.
		70%	18%	7%	5%		

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Anthony Mulcahy	Reporting Inspector
Huw Davies	Team Inspector
Margaret Davies	Team Inspector
Joseph Osbaldeston	Peer Inspector
Paul Scudamore	Independent School Standards Inspector
Gareth Hemming	Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups, the Foundation Phase and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms

Core subject indicator (CSI)	This relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum.
Level 1	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade D to G.
Level 1 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade D to G.
Level 2	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade A* to C.
Level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C including English or Welsh first language and mathematics
Level 2 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C.
Level 3	This represents the equivalent of an A level at grade A*-E.
Level 3 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to two A levels at grade A* to E.
Average wider points score	This includes all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the relevant age, for example at aged 16 or at aged 18.
Capped wider points score	This includes the best eight results from all qualifications approved for use in Wales at aged 16.
Proprietor	The term 'proprietor', as defined in the Education Act 1996, means the person or people responsible for managing an independent school and can include a sole proprietor, governing bodies, trustees or directors. The ways that independent schools are governed and owned varies a great deal. A proprietor or trust may own a school or the school may have a governing body that appoints a headteacher. Some schools have a combination of these.