



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

**A report on
Ty Coryton**

Date of inspection: January 2020

by

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

About Ty Coryton

Tŷ Coryton provides a specialist integrated day and residential service for children and young people between the ages of eight and nineteen years who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) including challenging behaviour. In addition many pupils have speech, communication and language difficulties and around half of pupils do not communicate using speech. The majority have severe learning difficulties also.

There are currently 23 pupils on roll. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan (EHCP). Nearly all current pupils are placed by authorities in Wales. Just under half of the young people are in the care of their local authority.

The school is accommodated in a large mansion house on the outskirts of Cardiff.

Eleven pupils are resident in the Tŷ Coryton children's home that has separate purpose-built accommodation on-site.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards pupils achieve at Tŷ Coryton with national averages or to analyse trends in performance over time because of the nature of pupils' special educational needs.

The head of education has been in post since October 2018 and reports to the organisation's director of children's services.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Ty Coryton is a caring and inclusive school where, over time, pupils make suitable progress that is in line with their ability and personal targets. Most pupils form trusting relationships with staff and become increasingly tolerant of others. Teachers create positive and calming classroom routines that maximise learning.

The school has a well-planned approach for the progressive development of pupils' skills and many pupils engage consistently well in their learning and respond enthusiastically. Many pupils develop important independence skills such as self-care, handling money and food preparation.

Multi-disciplinary working is a significant strength of the school and is highly effective in meeting the needs of pupils. Leaders have strengthened the aims and vision for the school and there are suitable improvement priorities that focus clearly on further developing the quality of provision for all pupils.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

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 teacher's planning meets the communication needs of all pupils

R2 Review the role and responsibilities of care staff in education

R3 Further develop professional learning opportunities for all staff

R4 Improve the acoustics in the building

What happens next

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what actions the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents/carers at the school.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Over time, and with the sensitive support of staff, nearly all pupils make suitable progress in line with their ability and personal targets.

During lessons, many pupils listen intently and settle quickly. They maintain their attention and follow the instructions of staff closely, particularly when being re-directed. Older, more able pupils listen actively for longer periods of time and respond to the requests of staff appropriately.

Overall, pupils' language skills vary considerably. With the sensitive support of staff pupils with limited speech develop the confidence to sound out and repeat sounds and single words. Over time, they volunteer responses to questions and make their views known more readily. Older, more able pupils discuss confidently and fluently topics ranging from school work to personal interests. A few pupils use sign supported systems to communicate with staff. However, the use of signing by pupils is not consistent.

Most pupils develop their reading skills effectively as they progress through the school. For example, when reading symbols, matching letters of the alphabet and selecting useful items for inclusion in their word bank on the theme 'seasons'. Most pupils enjoy reading sessions and participate enthusiastically. They respond well to familiar stories and derive meaning from them. Many read their daily visual schedules well also. The majority of pupils use symbols to sequence, for example, the instructions for making salt dough monsters. Older, more able pupils read a range of texts competently for different purposes. For example, when reading a daily newspaper, they know the difference between fact and opinion and can detect implicit meaning in texts.

Across the school, pupils' handwriting ranges from early mark making, single letter formation to cursive handwriting. Many pupils develop these skills through activities that improve their control and fine motor skills, for example threading beads, zipping their own jackets and strengthening their pencil grip. A minority of pupils overwrite letters with increasing confidence and a few achieve this with precision. Most pupils' writing skills are limited to simple single words or short sentences. A minority of more able pupils write extended pieces of non-fiction. They write with accuracy and clarity, and use a range of literary devices, such as metaphor and simile to engage the reader.

Most pupils develop their number skills securely in relation to simple addition and subtraction. They use these to count in different combinations up to 10. Most pupils sort objects into groups including colour, or items such as toffee apples and fireworks when celebrating bonfire night. A few pupils use tally charts when recording class likes and dislikes. In addition, they develop useful shape, space and measuring skills when sorting and matching two-dimensional shapes. Most pupils apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum successfully, for example, when using their basic money handling skills to run the school's tuck trolley and during visits to local shops. More able pupils use their numerical skills effectively in a range of different contexts across the curriculum for example, when interpreting graphs and charts on pupil attendance.

The majority of pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) resources with growing confidence. They interact with software and respond assuredly to various prompts on interactive whiteboards. A minority of pupils use the internet independently to search for items of special interest and for class related activities.

Overall, most pupils develop valuable independence skills effectively. This ranges from removing items of outdoor clothing, making choices about what book to read and which learning activity they would like to take part in. Many make strong progress in their skills for independent living such as domestic skills, self-care, cookery and working in a small group in the 'busy bees' cleaning team.

Nearly all current pupils have attained externally accredited units of qualifications in a range of topic areas including gardening, baking and citizenship. A third of pupils have achieved a full qualification, and more able pupils have completed a range of vocational qualifications including technology and finance. However, in two of the last three years very few pupils have achieved recognised qualifications by the time they leave the school.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils in Ty Coryton respond positively to the caring and inclusive ethos of the school. Over time, many pupils make strong progress in developing the essential skills and strategies they require to understand their emotions and manage their own behaviour successfully. Most pupils form trusting relationships with staff, become increasingly tolerant of one another and are polite and respectful toward visitors. Many pupils feel safe and know who to talk to if they feel anxious. This contributes effectively to the standards of pupils' wellbeing and the progress they make at the school.

Many pupils develop a greater understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, diet and exercise. Over time, many pupils develop purposeful skills as they prepare healthy options in the weekly school café or snack tuck trolley serving, for example, fruit skewers and fruit faces. They learn how to make healthy choices and take part in worthwhile physical activities such as a ballet-based movement class, parkour free running, gymnastics, trampolining and archery. Many pupils make good use of the outdoor play equipment such as the garden trail and large swings. This enables them to develop strategies to self-regulate and calm themselves and improves their overall level of wellbeing. Many pupils also use the external learning environment well when, for example, making bird feeders and bug houses.

Many pupils, with support, respond positively to one another. Many pupils settle quickly to activities, take pride in their achievements and develop valuable skills in working alongside and collaboratively with other pupils. Most pupils co-operate with staff as they sit and listen to stories with patience and work on joint projects such as ice paintings. The majority of pupils show resilience in attending to tasks, listening to others and movements throughout the day. They persevere and complete tasks successfully. More able pupils engage in meaningful conversations with their peers and adults. They discuss maturely the effects of smoking on their body and willingly share their experiences.

Many pupils behave well and respond enthusiastically to the whole school positive behaviour approach. When there is off-task behaviour, most pupils return quickly to their activities when prompted by staff. Other pupils are not overly distracted by off-task behaviours.

Nearly all pupils attend the school very well and these pupils make strong progress when compared with their starting points in wellbeing and learning.

A few more able pupils develop valuable life skills across a range of purposeful work experience settings such as in a local museum, charity shop and cafe.

Many pupils develop and exercise roles and responsibilities in the school effectively. The school council and eco-committee are well established. Pupils develop leadership roles appropriately. For example, pupils on the school council raise money selling items at a Christmas fayre and arrange questionnaires for their peers to feedback on future initiatives. The eco committee planned and successfully completed a beach litter pick and has achieved a recognised environmental award.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Pupils benefit from a flexible curriculum designed to take account of their individual starting points, with a strong focus on developing their skills. The curriculum is adapted carefully to build systematically on each pupil's knowledge, skills and understanding as they progress through the school. This tailored provision meets each pupil's individual education plans well and has a positive impact on their attitudes to learning and progress.

The curriculum is complemented by several valuable enrichment activities that extend and enhance pupils' knowledge and experiences successfully. For example, most pupils engage enthusiastically in the 'super learning days', which focus activities on real-life contexts such as World Food Day, mental health awareness and the Chinese New Year.

All pupils have worthwhile opportunities to develop important life skills through the personal development and linked technology programmes. These opportunities include, for example, completing supported daily living tasks such as cooking simple recipes and basic housekeeping. Where appropriate, pupils also have beneficial opportunities to develop important life skills through work-related placements. These placements are particularly effective in developing older pupils' confidence, self-esteem and understanding of their learning pathway choices. Overall, however, opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities are under-developed.

The school has a well-planned approach for developing pupils' communication, literacy, numeracy, social and life skills progressively across the curriculum. Detailed planning for each class and each pupil helps to ensure that the full range of pupils' learning experiences provide progressive and mostly purposeful opportunities for them to develop these skills. For example, the sensory and intervention sessions,

which start each pupil's day, provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities to reinforce and extend their communication and fine motor skills. This provision helps many pupils to apply these skills successfully in different curriculum contexts.

The overall quality of teaching enables most pupils to make strong progress from their individual starting points. Most teachers have positive and calming classroom routines. These routines are clearly understood by pupils and generally adhered to, which helps to maximise learning. Most teachers and learning support assistants know their pupils, their abilities and contexts very well. Many teachers use this information thoughtfully to plan valuable activities and prepare quality resources to motivate, stretch and support pupils' learning effectively. In these classes, teachers monitor pupil progress closely and use skilful questioning to probe pupils' understanding. Where appropriate, they adapt the session to address any misunderstanding and present tasks and ideas in new or different ways. The majority of teachers have high expectations of pupils, and challenge them at a suitable level, often making effective use of the school's motivation and rewards system.

Where teaching is particularly effective there is strong team-working between staff and the flexible use of communication strategies helps to provide extremely sensitive support to pupils. As a result, learning takes place in a remarkably secure environment where pupils feel free to enjoy the opportunity to make mistakes and learn from them. However, on the few occasions where teaching is less effective, activities are not planned well enough to meet all pupils' needs and there is too much variation in staff use of communication strategies.

Almost all class teachers and learning support assistants give pupils encouraging and supportive oral feedback during sessions, which most pupils respond to well. Teachers' written feedback on pupils' work is generally informative and focuses greatly on the positive. This written feedback is routinely shared with pupils and they listen attentively to it, and respond appropriately. This approach, together with the thorough evaluation that class teachers make after each lesson, is effective for planning next steps.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes values of tolerance and respect strongly. It is particularly sensitive to the needs and abilities of every pupil. Nearly all staff are positive role models and reinforce these values positively throughout the school day.

The school takes great care in deploying staff to support pupils. Staff and pupils build trusting relationships. The skilful support pupils receive from most learning support assistants impacts positively on pupils.

The multi-disciplinary working between education, care and therapy staff is a significant strength of the work of Ty Coryton and is highly effective in meeting the needs of pupils. The progress of, and provision for, pupils is under constant review. This contributes strongly to the progress that pupils make and to their wellbeing. For example, when pupils have been unable to attend school due to serious illness, the school has provided education in hospital settings and in the care home. These arrangements ensure continuity in the education provided and assist greatly when pupils transition back into school.

Daily meetings between care and education teams ensure that staff share relevant information on pupils and use this information sensitively to allocate appropriate levels of support. Care staff from the home provide additional support for pupils during the school day. These staff provide sensitive and careful support for pupils in education, however, overall, there is a lack of clarity in their role and responsibilities during educational activities.

The school has effective processes in place to track and monitor pupil progress. It has recently introduced a broader range of assessments to determine the abilities of pupils when they join the school. As a result, the school has a strong understanding of the needs of pupils. It uses this information well to set targets on pupils' individual education plans and track the progress that pupils make over time. The school uses pupils' learning journals effectively to record and celebrate pupil's achievements through their learning activities. Regular meetings are used to good effect to review pupil progress and adapt approaches according to individual need.

The school provides appropriate occasions for pupils to participate in worthwhile decision-making activities. Pupils have the opportunity to join the school council, eco-committee, and Orbis schools' young peoples forum and contribute purposefully to decisions that affect their life in the school. For example, the school council recently agreed that pupils should decide on who runs the tuck trolley. Pupils also have opportunities to participate in community events with their peers, such as their recent success in an enterprise competition.

The school makes effective provision for pupils to develop their understanding about healthy life style choices that are relevant to their needs. This ranges from in-depth discussions on the dangers of smoking to making simple food choices to extend pupils tolerances of different food types. The school's personal and social education programme provides valuable learning experiences for most pupils that reflect effectively individual pupils' levels of ability. For example, pupils receive support to develop independent personal hygiene skills and how to keep themselves safe online or in the community. The school's approach to behaviour management is robust. Relevant policies provide clear guidance to staff on the need for consistency of approach. All pupils have comprehensive behaviour plans.

The school has positive working relationship with parents. It provides detailed information through reports, at meetings and more frequently through apps.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meets requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The recently appointed head of education has strengthened the aims and vision for the school. All staff share these and are committed to maximising the quality of provision, learning experiences and securing the best possible outcomes for all pupils.

The leadership team very effectively promote values of trust and a common sense of purpose. Leaders have involved the whole staff team in reviewing the curriculum and implementing change. As a result, staff are committed and enthusiastic about their work.

The head of education and senior leadership team have brought stability to the school that has had four heads of education over the past seven years. The school has secured permanent staff to key positions and has clarified their roles and responsibilities. The distribution of leadership responsibilities for teaching and support staff is appropriate, based on individual skill and interest and, impacts positively on outcomes for pupils.

Staff meet with leaders regularly and these are essential to the efficient running of the school on a day-to-day basis and in progressing the school's improvement priorities. Appropriate actions are assigned to staff and followed up on routinely. Senior learning support assistants can attend these meetings however there are limited opportunities for many learning support assistants to engage in them. As a result, this limits their overall knowledge of the priorities in the school and their role in contributing to them.

Processes for ensuring pupil progress are robust and improving. Leaders encourage staff to be reflective in their practice and to contribute fully to the school improvement process. Leaders know the school very well and provide valuable support in developing teachers engagement in school self-evaluation practices. As a result, the self-evaluation process is becoming more widely understood. However, learning support assistants have limited opportunities to contribute to the process.

The school's improvement plan is comprehensive and includes challenging targets and key performance indicators that link to, for example, strengthening leadership and teaching and developing the curriculum. Priorities are clear, and teachers increasingly understand their role in achieving these targets. The head of education has a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. She has implemented effective systems, processes and structures to monitor the effectiveness of priorities in the improvement plan.

The head of education is passionate for staff to develop their skills. As a result, the school has conducted an audit of staff skills, strengthened its staff supervision sessions and formalised the identification of professional development opportunities for staff. The professional learning of staff aligns very well to the school's priorities and the development needs of staff. The school is developing a structured professional learning pathway for support staff but this is at an early stage of development.

The governance board oversees the work of the school and knows the school very well. It receives detailed and evaluative reports from the head of education and director of children's services on a regular basis. Actions are clearly identified and progress is reported on consistently. The governance board are fully involved in the school self-evaluation process and the development of the school improvement priorities. They provide very effective challenge and support to the leadership of the school.

The school's budget is managed effectively. The on-site maintenance team ensure that the learning environment is well maintained and that the health and safety of pupils is a high priority. However, the acoustics in a few areas of the building are poor and not conducive to the wellbeing of pupils who are hyper sensitive to noise.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teaching and support staff through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- meet proprietors, school leaders and individual members of teaching and support staff to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- visit lessons and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school had taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

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

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses 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.

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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