



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

**Annual monitoring inspection report on
Priory Talocher School**

Date of inspection: October 2016

by

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

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Context

Priory Talocher is an independent special school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) and associated needs. It is administered by Priory Education Services. This is part of the wider Priory Group which has over 30 schools and specialist colleges across England and Wales.

The school provides education for pupils who are unable to attend mainstream schools as well as for pupils who are resident in Priory children's homes. There are 30 pupils aged from 9 to 19 years, of whom 28 are boys and two are girls. All 30 pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN). Sixteen pupils are looked after by local authorities in Wales and England.

A new headteacher took up her post in September 2016. The former headteacher is now principal with wider responsibility for both Priory Talocher and another of the company's schools.

The school has obtained planning consent from the local authority to extend the teaching accommodation by providing new primary and secondary teaching blocks as well as a main hall and administration building. The aim is to open the new accommodation by September 2017. The school should seek consent from the National Assembly for Wales to make a material change for the new premises and also to increase the number of pupils on roll.

Main findings

Strengths

Most pupils make suitable progress in attaining accredited qualifications at their own level, given their low starting point.

Most teachers are good role models for pupils. For example, they make their expectations clear, manage poor behaviour well and provide good quality resources.

The curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of valuable learning experiences.

There are effective processes to assess, monitor and track pupils' progress. These inform teachers' planning so as to make sure that the curriculum meets pupils' learning needs.

The school's reward system is effective in encouraging pupils to reflect on their own and each other's behaviour.

The newly structured pastoral arrangements provide pupils with appropriate support in class and throughout the day.

The premises provide an attractive learning environment that is well maintained.

The new leadership team is reviewing provision effectively and identifying appropriate priorities for development.

The school has made good progress in addressing most of the recommendations of the previous report.

Areas for development

Overall, pupils make slower progress in developing their literacy skills than in developing skills in other subjects.

The timetable for pupils in key stage 2 identifies lessons in literacy, numeracy, music, physical education and personal and social education. In practice, pupils have opportunities to experience a broad curriculum, for example through their current topic on 'The Jungle Book'. Teachers' planning is detailed. However, the timetable does not give a clear enough overview of the day-to-day work.

The school is developing its range of resources for pupils in key stage 2. However, there are too few reading books at an age and stage appropriate level.

Pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) link appropriately to the objectives in pupils' statements of SEN and are reviewed termly. However, targets identified in the IEPs are too general and therefore it is not always easy for teachers to measure pupils' progress in achieving them.

The school keeps separate log books of serious incidents, additional measures of control, and physical interventions. Staff may enter details of the same incident in all 3 logs by hand, before completing a more detailed report electronically that is copied to the proprietor. From these records the school analyses the behaviours of staff and pupils appropriately. Although the school maintains careful records of incidents, there is unnecessary duplication in the serious incident and additional measures of control logs.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' standards in literacy
- R2 Ensure that the timetable at key stage 2 reflects the work in practice and provides pupils with a broad enough range of experiences
- R3 Develop a range of age and stage appropriate reading resources, particularly for pupils at key stage 2
- R4 Ensure that targets in pupils' individual education plans are more specific and measurable.
- R5 Review the recording systems of serious incidents and additional measures of control

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

Recommendation 1: Take steps to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school has developed an appropriate curriculum policy and makes it available to parents and carers.

Recommendation 2: Improve self-evaluation processes to include a greater emphasis on standards of achievement

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has carried out thorough analysis of pupil data and has identified the need to broaden the scope of its provision to provide greater academic challenge for all pupils. Staff now have a clear understanding of inconsistencies between outcomes for different subjects. As a result, they have improved planning across the curriculum and are implementing appropriate strategies to improve the outcomes for all pupils, particularly the more able.

Recommendation 3: Involve all teachers in a structured programme of opportunities to observe effective practice with a clear focus and purposeful evaluation

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Staff have participated in a broad range of visits to observe good practice in different settings. These include a sixthform college as well as special, primary and secondary schools. Each visit has a specific aim, for example to improve assessment and tracking or to ensure that the curriculum meets individual pupil needs more efficiently. In the best practice, staff have identified appropriate strategies to help them improve their own practice as a result of the visits. These include, for example, giving pupils suitable opportunities to develop more independence by allowing them more time to answer questions, and avoiding an overreliance on internet resources.

Recommendation 4: Provide opportunities for pupils and parents to comment on termly reports

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The half-termly academic reports now contain a section for pupils' comments and parent/carers' comments.

Recommendation 5: Improve the development of pupils' literacy skills

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Most pupils join the school with literacy skills that are below the standard expected for their age. Many of them are resistant to developing these skills. The school's data analysis indicates that in 2015-2016 pupils made less progress in English than other subjects during the summer term.

This term, the school has set up a staff working group to develop an action plan to raise standards in literacy. The group is reviewing the school's resources, particularly for reading where they have identified the need for more robust diagnostic assessment.

Staff are working with other schools in the Priory group to moderate pupils' work. The newly appointed subject coordinator is also developing a link with a comprehensive school's English department to share good practice. For example, the teachers have reviewed mediumterm planning together and shared on-line support.

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, social 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 the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

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 the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Recommendation regarding registration

When considering this school's registration the National Assembly for Wales 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 annual monitoring inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.

School information

School	Priory Talocher School
School number	6796014
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	12/10/2016
Proprietor	Priory Education Services
Staff	8 f/t teacher s including 2 x NQTs(1 maternity leave) 7 pastoral staff 2.5 administration staff 2 maintenance staff
Number of pupils	30
Provision	Day
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school	SEMH
Last Section 163 inspection	03/06/2013
Last annual monitoring inspection	06/04/2015
Last CSSIW inspection	

Team information

Rosemary Lloyd Lait	Reporting Inspector
Ann Dackevych	Team Inspector