



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

**A report on**

**Aran Hall School**

**Date of inspection: December 2019**

**by**

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

## About Aran Hall School

Aran Hall is an independent special school situated close to Dolgellau in Gwynedd. The school is one of five specialist schools operated across England and Wales by the SENAD group.

The school provides education, care and therapy for pupils aged 11 to 19 who have a range of learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders and associated challenging behaviours.

The school currently has 11 pupils on roll, all of whom are boys who live in the children's home which shares the school's site. All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and are looked after by local authorities in England.

Nearly all of the pupils are from English-speaking backgrounds.

The principal has been in post since 2003. The deputy principal and the head of education were appointed in September 2019.

## Main findings

### ***Strengths***

Nearly all pupils make steady progress in meeting the targets in their individual learning and behaviour plans. As they move through the school, nearly all pupils gain suitable accreditation to record their achievements.

The school undertakes initial and regular on-going assessment of pupils' needs. These comprehensive assessments provide teachers with a thorough understanding of pupils' abilities across a range of subjects and areas of learning, including behaviour. Generally, teachers make good use of the outcomes of these assessments to target priority areas of learning in their lessons.

The school offers pupils a well-structured learning experience with clear and appropriate systems of rewards that support and promote positive behaviour both in the short and long term.

The school plans effectively to support pupils' transition. As they come to the end of their school career, pupils take part in beneficial life skills training, work experience and where appropriate, college placements. Pupils on the life skills and independence programme prepare useful life history books to document their experiences and achievements at Aran Hall. The books provide an informed record of learning and accreditation to support transition to the next stage of learning and adulthood.

Leadership of the school is highly effective. The senior leadership team has recently been strengthened and appropriate plans secured for the succession of the principal on his retirement from full-time work in 2020. These plans include appropriate further professional development of the new leaders. This assured strategic planning provides the school with consistency of leadership.

The school evaluates efficiently aspects of its practice and shares outcomes through academic publications, talks and lectures. This enables others to learn about its good practice.

### ***Areas for development***

The school makes effective use of standardised tests to establish pupils' skills in mathematics. However, teachers do not always make best use of this assessment data to plan appropriate strategies to improve pupils' numeracy skills.

Appropriately, the school has identified the need to improve the opportunities for pupils to benefit from a range of outdoor learning experiences. However, plans to implement these improvements are at a very early stage

## **Recommendations**

**The school should:**

**R1. Ensure pupils have regular opportunities to build systematically on their knowledge and understanding of numeracy across the curriculum**

**R2. Increase opportunities for pupils to use the outdoor environment in the development of their learning and skills**

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

**Recommendation 1: Ensure staff make links with appropriate other providers to support their ongoing professional practice in relation to the curriculum**

Since the last visit, the school has made useful links with providers around Wales and beyond. Nearly all staff have strengthened their professional development through visits to a range of appropriate providers. They are developing a strong network of support and a good awareness of new curriculum developments.

As a direct result of their visits, the school has increased the range of accreditation to meet the interests and abilities of individual pupils and improved internal moderation of English and mathematics.

The school has a better understanding of the emerging new curriculum in Wales after visiting a local pioneer school. The link with this school is helping teachers in their planning of the curriculum at Aran Hall.

## **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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 2.

### ***Standard 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils***

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 3.

### ***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 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 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](http://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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