



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

A report on

Red Rose School

**Allensbank Cresecent
Heath
Cardiff
CF14 3PR**

Date of inspection: March 2022

by

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

About Red Rose School

Red Rose School is an independent special school in the Heath area of Cardiff. It provides day placements for pupils aged seven to nineteen years who have moderate and severe learning difficulties or social and emotional difficulties. The school opened in December 2009.

There are currently 27 pupils on the school roll. Most pupils are in key stages 3 and 4. There is an even gender split of pupils at the school. The first language of nearly all the pupils is English. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan (EHCP). A few pupils are looked after by local authorities. Cardiff local authority funds most of the placements with a very few placements funded by the Vale of Glamorgan and Norfolk.

The school is based in a community building. Over a period of time the school has extended its accommodation with an additional building on the main site and an additional two off site premises.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher were both appointed in September 2019.

The last core inspection was in 2014 and last annual monitoring visit (AMV) was February 2020.

Summary

Red Rose school is a calm, caring and welcoming school. The support for pupils' emotional well-being is central to the work of the school. Most pupils thrive in this provision and develop their confidence, becoming increasingly independent as they progress through the school. Pupil voice is a strength. Pupils proactively contribute to improvements across the school through a range of pupil-led forums.

Leaders are highly effective. They provide positive role models for staff and pupils and provide stability for the school. Leaders have strengthened the educational provision for all pupils. Staff are highly motivated in their roles and contribute effectively to supporting pupil progress. As a result, consistency in the quality of teaching is beginning to improve.

During the pandemic, the school remained open and staff ensured that pupils had access to online learning where appropriate. Despite the ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic, staff and pupils at the school have shown high levels of perseverance.

Most pupils develop effective social skills which promote their resilience to become successful learners well. Pupils improve their literacy and numeracy skills appropriately across a range of stimulating activities. This is strengthened through an exciting and broad range of opportunities for pupils to engage in activities in the local community. Pupils engage extremely well in these activities and develop their vocational skills well.

The school fully complies with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

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 Improve the opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum

R2 Improve the consistency and quality of teaching across the school

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.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Learning

Most pupils make suitable progress during their time at the school from their individual starting points. In a few cases, pupils make exceptional progress.

Many pupils make effective progress in their literacy skills. They improve their listening skills as they progress through the school, and respond appropriately to both adults and each other. They improve their reading skills to access a range of texts and information suitable to their level of ability and interests. Many pupils arrive at the school able to write but choose not to. Over time pupils improve their confidence and develop their handwriting skills and understanding allowing them to write for a range of different purposes. For example, pupils write reports about their visit to St Fagans as part of their subject course work.

Many pupils make appropriate progress in their numeracy skills. They develop secure number skills and can add, subtract, multiply and divide with increasing confidence and complexity. Most pupils respond well in using their numeracy skills in meaningful activities. For example, they plan and budget confidently to shop for ingredients to make a simple meal.

Many pupils have basic ICT skills. For example, they create a presentation as part of their animal care course work. However, pupils do not develop their ICT skills progressively over time.

In lessons most pupils make suitable progress. They build successfully on prior learning to develop a secure understanding of key concepts. For example, during their weekly visit to a local city farm, pupils describe the stages of pregnancy and birth referring to the pregnant sheep at the farm.

Most pupils develop effective social skills. They work in pairs or small groups depending on the activity and listen and respond appropriately to contributions made by other pupils in class discussions. At break times, pupils play well together, playing tag or football. Many develop their communication skills well. For example, pupils discuss what it means to be a friendship mentor, and offer insightful suggestions on what this could mean.

Most pupils improve their physical skills suitably helping them to understand the importance of being fit and healthy. For example, pupils enjoy weekly badminton lessons to improve their physical fitness levels, co-ordination skills and confidence.

Many pupils develop their creative skills appropriately. Younger pupils have designed and drawn dragon eyes as part of their topic about Welsh culture and heritage. As part of their work experience, older pupils work creatively with a range of materials such as textiles, photography, and clay.

Nearly all pupils develop their independent living skills effectively. Younger pupils develop these skills for example by preparing simple snacks at break times. As pupils progress through the school, they practise and develop these skills in houses owned

by the school. The tasks they undertake include how to use a range of kitchen appliances safely, bed making, budgeting, shopping, and meal preparation. In addition, pupils practise their independent living skills in the local community by using a launderette and developing their travel skills using public transport. Nearly all pupils benefit from these opportunities to develop important life skills in preparation for their post school placements. Most pupils gain qualifications linked to these activities which recognise pupils' achievements successfully.

Nearly all older pupils access an increased and relevant range of accreditation which reflect their needs, abilities and interests well.

Over the last three years, all pupils leaving Key Stage 4 and 5 progressed into education, training, or employment.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils settle well when they join the school across all key stages. Most make beneficial progress in their emotional development and behaviour and respond favourably to the highly effective well-being support they receive. As a result, pupils are emotionally ready to accept and engage in learning more readily.

Nearly all pupils across the school respond well to the strong culture of respect amongst staff and pupils. As a result, there are highly effective and trusting working relationships between pupils and staff. These positive working relationships mean that nearly all pupils in the school feel safe and enjoy coming to school most of the time. There is a strong sense of respect and empathy amongst the pupils. This is reflected in pupils' participation in the school's peer mentoring program where pupils support each other in their school experiences. For example, older pupils offer younger pupils support to join in games during playtimes.

Most pupils are proud of their progress, achievements and work they produce, and they are also proud to welcome visitors to the school. Many pupils engage well in lessons and in new and unfamiliar experiences. For example, they engage enthusiastically in Spanish lessons and during circus skill activities. This has a positive impact on pupils' confidence and resilience, strengthening their perseverance in their schoolwork and decision-making ability. However, due to the proximity and layout of some classes, a few pupils become distracted and struggle to concentrate.

Many pupils engage successfully with the well-established school council. This is a particular strength of the school. They demonstrate respect for the contributions of others by listening to their points of view and responding appropriately when other pupils disagree with them. These pupils take on leadership roles and responsibilities and play a valuable part in school life. For example, following discussions with senior leaders about break times and activity choices, improvements were made to broaden pupils' school timetables. In addition, pupils now have more frequent but shorter breaktimes in the school day rather than the more traditional set breaktime patterns. As a result, most pupils feel that adults in the school listen to their views, and they positively influence actions taken at the school.

Nearly all pupils develop a sense of belonging to the local and wider community. For example, they engage positively with neighbours to improve the local environment. Most pupils participate successfully in learning about human rights and are keen to discuss such issues during lessons. Pupils have a link with a school in Africa and write to their pen pals in Nairobi and enjoy receiving letters from them. This helps pupils understand the life of a young person living in a very different environment to their own.

Most pupils engage positively with the school's strong personal, social and health education curriculum. For example, they plan and cook healthy meals, take part in regular physical activity and mindfulness sessions. As a result, many pupils make positive decisions relating to diet, physical activity, and emotional wellbeing.

Most pupils demonstrate appropriate standards of behaviour during planned activities and around the school. They behave well at break and lunch times. Pupils respond well to the effective strategies staff use and as a result there has been a significant reduction in incidents of unacceptable or challenging behaviour. Over time most pupils improve and learn how to manage their behaviour sufficiently well to access off-site activities successfully.

Owing to the Coronavirus pandemic, inspectors will not report pupils' rates of attendance during the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. Inspectors will, however, consider the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance as part of inspection area 4 (care, support and guidance).

Teaching and learning experiences

Since the last inspection, staff at the school have continued to develop the curriculum to match the needs and interests of pupils successfully. The curriculum is aspirational and covers a wide range of interesting topics including French and Spanish. Leaders at the school have secured additional subject specialist teachers to deliver mathematics and English to older pupils as part of an appropriate focus on core subject areas. The curriculum offer allows pupils to study accredited courses where appropriate. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum and meets the requirement for the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Alongside the curriculum, the school offers an extensive variety of engaging and meaningful enrichment activities. For example, pupils have opportunities to access a local art centre, a local climbing centre and table tennis centre. These activities provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their well-being, creativity, and vocational skills as well as opportunities to collaborate with others.

Staff enable pupils to make choices about their learning and pupils have a positive impact on the development of the curriculum. For example, as a result of listening to pupils' views, staff ensure that there are regular and worthwhile opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and history.

The curriculum has a beneficial focus on personal, health and social education and well-being. This provides pupils with the opportunity to develop relevant and important skills, such as learning how to stay safe online and about healthy relationships.

The school ensures that pupils have valuable opportunities to prepare for the responsibilities of adult life. Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop independent living skills through road safety and food hygiene activities. In addition, strong links with Careers Wales provide pupils with worthwhile and individualised careers advice.

Staff at the school know their pupils very well. They collaborate to record effective strategies to engage, motivate and support pupils. As a result, teaching practice is improving, the number of incidents of challenging behaviour has reduced and pupil engagement in lessons has increased. Most teachers use well-established routines successfully to ensure that pupils arrive at lessons ready to learn.

Across the school many activities are engaging and are well-matched to the interests of pupils. For example, younger pupils take part in a bug hunt to develop their mathematical and scientific skills.

Leaders have introduced appropriate systems to track pupils' progress in reading, writing, numeracy and well-being. As a result, staff are beginning to strengthen their understanding of pupil progress in these areas.

Where planning, assessment and feedback are effective, both staff and pupils have a good understanding of progress and how to move learning forward. However, teachers' planning does not always link well enough to pupil needs and does not focus well enough on individual targets identified in statements of special educational need. In addition, teachers do not always provide the specific support pupils need to meet their communication needs.

Most activities in the school are calm and positive due to the strong relationships between pupils and staff. However, across the school the quality of teaching is too variable. A few teachers' understanding of what pupils can achieve is not matched well enough to pupil ability. A few teachers do not explain concepts clearly enough and, as a result, a few pupils become disengaged or do not fully understand the work they have been given.

During a very few activities, younger pupils are not consistently given opportunities to learn using practical activities or to apply their learning meaningfully. As a result, in these activities, pupils do not fully engage or progress as well as they could.

Staff provide valuable praise to pupils. This helps pupils develop a strong sense of pride in their learning. However, the quality of feedback is too variable to help pupils know how to improve their learning.

Reports to parents and carers on their children's progress are regular, clear, and informative and sent to parents via their preferred communication method. These reports contain important information about curriculum coverage, what is going well and next steps to improve. Parents and carers value these regular updates about pupil progress against targets.

Staff have worked well to make the learning environment positive, using colourful displays to celebrate pupil achievements. However, the open-plan teaching areas

can have a negative impact on teaching and learning experiences for a few pupils who become easily distracted by the behaviour of other pupils.

Care, support and guidance

Red Rose School is a close-knit community that offers strong care and support for its pupils. The caring ethos ensures that pupils attend regularly and feel safe at school.

The school has strong systems to communicate with parents and carers who receive information and updates through a wide range of accessible methods. As a result, parents and carers are well informed of their child's academic progress and of their well-being. This beneficial partnership with parents and carers develops their ability to support pupils well.

The school's behaviour policy provides clear and supportive strategies to reward and improve pupils' behaviour. Pupils look forward to their Friday reward sessions. Over time these approaches have reduced the number of incidents of unacceptable or challenging behaviour. The school uses helpful strategies that enable pupils to reflect successfully on their behaviour and learn to manage their emotions well.

The school has effective arrangements to meet the needs of pupils with additional learning needs. The support staff provide valuable support to pupils. Pupils' individual profiles are helpful documents, which highlight important information for staff. Individual educational targets are relevant and provide clear advice and guidance on supporting pupils effectively. The school works successfully with pupils, parents and carers and external agencies in developing and reviewing individual targets to meet pupils' additional learning needs. However, in a very few cases, pupils' targets are not presented in a way that they understand.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal, moral, and social development is a strength. The school has a well-focused personal health and social education programme across all key stages. It provides valuable opportunities supporting pupils to reflect on personal values, to challenge prejudice and to develop empathy towards others. In addition, pupils develop as well-rounded citizens, and this is strongly supported during assemblies. For example, pupils present rewards to their peers for showing kindness or resilience. Another strength is the range of exciting extra-curricular activities, which make a valuable contribution towards developing pupils' self-confidence and resilience. This includes opportunities to attend gymnastics lessons, visits to Welsh landmarks and regular opportunities for pupils to volunteer at a dog's home in Cardiff.

A notable feature of the school's work is the way in which staff encourage pupils' active involvement in all aspects of school life and the wider community. Staff provide extensive opportunities to develop pupils' skills such as decision-making in various groups. The school's peer mentor group offers valuable support during 'cheer up' sessions for pupils to develop ways to manage their anger and anxiety.

The staff plan valuable experiences to develop pupils' awareness of careers and the world of work. They ensure a range of activities, which help pupils to make informed decisions about their future, including through work experience opportunities at a local farm.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders have established an ethos where pupils feel secure and are listened to. There are robust safeguarding processes in place to report safeguarding concerns and the school makes timely referrals to outside agencies when appropriate. Staff are aware of school procedures and of their duties and responsibilities regarding safeguarding. All staff undertake regular safeguarding training at an appropriate level. Staff are supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to any safeguarding concerns. The school has sound safer recruitment procedures and ensures that all new members of staff receive safeguarding information upon appointment. The school's arrangements to keep pupils safe meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management

Leadership at Red Rose School is effective and provides stability across the school. Since the appointment of the headteacher and deputy headteacher in 2019, in spite of the challenges presented by the pandemic, they have continued to successfully drive improvement at the school. In addition, leaders have worked closely with staff, parents, pupils, and stakeholders to develop a clear, shared vision for the school.

In a short space of time leaders have reviewed previous policies and procedures. They have introduced comprehensive processes and systems to strengthen the quality assurance arrangements. Senior leaders have developed a detailed programme for evaluating the work of the school. This provides a useful overview of key events over the year and includes a programme of lesson observations, assessment dates, meeting dates and professional learning sessions.

Leaders have successfully fostered and strengthened staff involvement and understanding as changes occur. As a result, staff are highly motivated and engage successfully with these changes. Leaders are particularly visible around the school. They act as positive role models for pupils and provide valuable support for staff.

Leaders have established a robust self-evaluation process. All staff and pupils are involved in this process. Through carefully managed support from leaders, staff make meaningful contributions to the self-evaluation process and understand the school priorities for improvement. As a result, leaders and staff have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Leaders introduced lesson observations for teaching staff in 2019. Although this cycle was interrupted by the pandemic, it is currently being re-established and observations identify strengths and areas for development accurately and are helping teachers improve their teaching at the school. Leaders have accurately identified that this as a continuing area for improvement in the school development plan.

The headteacher has introduced a consistent performance management process for all staff. This ensures that staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities at a class and whole school level. This process supports the identification of professional learning needs effectively. However, senior leaders do not have access to a performance management process and as a result do not engage in professional dialogue that challenges their own performance and that of the school.

Leaders promote and support the professional learning of all staff effectively. Staff gain valuable knowledge and skills in important and relevant areas such as behaviour management and therapeutic approaches to address pupils' trauma. These activities align closely to school priorities and support staff to address the impact of the pandemic on pupils' well-being successfully. Leaders ensure that individual staff members routinely share training outcomes and good practice across the school. Leaders have provided practical arrangements for support staff to attend weekly staff meetings to share in the good practice and strengthen team working across the school. Many of the support staff receive beneficial training to support and strengthen working with pupils. Formal evaluation of all professional learning is at the very early stages of development.

Leaders and staff work together skilfully to promote a robust safeguarding culture. This ensures that the school provides a safe, caring environment that meets the needs of its pupils extremely well.

Leaders have developed highly effective strategic partnership working with a range of relevant stakeholders. These include Careers Wales, further education colleges, social care, and local authorities. For example, strong partnership working with transition officers at local colleges significantly strengthens transition arrangements for pupils planning to attend college. More recently, leaders have extended these arrangements to include a third college to increase the opportunities for pupils to attend colleges of their choice.

Partnership working with local authorities is particularly strong. Valuable working relationships with Cardiff local authority are benefiting the school, pupils, and parents. Support and guidance from the local authority to the school to implement the new additional learning needs guidance are effective. In addition, the headteacher is a member of the local authority Education other than at School (EOTAS) management board. This is strengthening the referral process for pupil placement at the school. The authority inclusion officer works proactively with the headteacher to support pupils who are already placed at the school and to plan for future pupil placements. This is impacting positively on preparations for strengthening transition arrangements for pupils joining the school.

Leaders have responded appropriately to the previous annual monitoring visit recommendations. The school is fully compliant with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

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

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors/proprietor(s), leaders and individual teachers 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
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit lessons and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning
- 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 (where appropriate), information on pupils' well-being, 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 ([Estyn Website](#))

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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