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

A report on

Sporting Chance

Date of inspection: October 2023

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Sporting Chance

Name of provider	Sporting Chance
Proprietor	Sporting Chance, Newport
Local authority	Newport City Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent
Residential provision?	No
Number of pupils on roll	11
Pupils of statutory school age	11
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	16/10/2023

Sporting Chance opened in summer 2021 as an independent day school providing additional learning provision for pupils with social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties.

The school is located close to the centre of the city of Newport and is administered by Sporting Chance Newport, a community interest company.

The school is registered for up to 16 pupils aged 11 to 16 years. There are currently 11 pupils on roll at the school, all of whom have a statement of special educational needs or equivalent. A few pupils are looked after by local authorities in Wales. The school has two classes.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2021. They are supported by an additional class teacher, head of sport, head of well-being, and a team of teaching and learning assistants.

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

     a.   The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Sporting Chance is a caring and nurturing school where all staff are committed to the school and their pupils. Leaders are approachable and staff value their openness and understanding.

Over their time at the school, most pupils make good progress in improving their well-being and behaviour. Nearly all pupils improve their social skills and learn to work with peers and staff.

Many pupils make appropriate progress in communication, reading, writing and numeracy skills and they learn to listen suitably to both peers and staff. However, only a very few pupils use extended writing and, for many pupils, spelling, punctuation and grammar are underdeveloped. In addition, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop and progress their digital, creative and independent living skills.

Nearly all pupils develop beneficial physical skills through the strong focus on sporting activities. Pupils enjoy these sessions and participate enthusiastically. This focus on sport also positively supports the development of pupils' resilience and self-confidence.

Currently, there are very limited opportunities for pupils contribute to decisions that affect the school. In addition, pupils do not develop their leadership skills well enough due to limited opportunities available to them.

Staff across the school know their pupils well and have high expectations for their behaviour. This understanding, their use of consistent routines and the skills they have in managing behaviour result in a generally calm learning environment with many pupils developing positive attitudes to learning over time. However, the school does not adequately track behaviour incidents or record sanctions.

The curriculum at the school is generally broad and balanced. However, the personal, social and health education (PSE) programme does not include thorough enough coverage of important areas. For example, relationships and sex education, careers and preparation for adulthood and the understanding and appreciation of different cultures are underdeveloped.

The quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent. Teaching staff plan experiences which broadly build on pupils' skills as they move through the school. However, planning does not link well enough to the pupils' individual learning needs or evidence from the schools' own assessments. In addition, there are limited opportunities for pupils to achieve accreditation within the school.

Staff and pupils plan targets that support learning in areas identified by pupils. These targets are not linked well enough to the objectives from pupils' individual development plans (IDPs) or equivalent. Further, there are limited procedures in place to track and monitor progress against these targets and, as a result, there is not a clear picture of the progress pupils make over time.

Overall, processes for tracking, monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's work in relation to the progress pupils are making are in the very early stages of development. As a result, the school has not identified important areas that require improvement and has made limited progress against the recommendations left by inspectors on the last visit. In addition, the school is not fully compliant with the Independent School Standard (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 does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school met most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 the school should:

- Ensure where pupils have a statement, the education fulfils its requirements [1(2)(e)]
- Ensure the school provides personal, social and health education which reflects its aims and ethos [1(2)(f)]
- Ensure there is adequate preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life [1(2)(j)]
- Ensure teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons [1(3)d]
- Ensure there is a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and information from such assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress [1(3)(g)]
- Ensure teachers provide education which enables all pupils within a class to make progress including pupils with statements and those for whom Welsh or English is an additional language [1(5)]

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school met most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 the school should:

- Provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services [2(d)]
- Assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions [2(e)]

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school met most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 the school should:

- Keep written records of sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious disciplinary offences [3(8)]

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   Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003

R2   Improve procedures for quality assurance and improvement planning to focus on pupil progress

R3   Improve the quality of pupils' targets and ensure that they inform the planning of teaching activities

R4   Ensure that curriculum planning provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn in real life contexts and to follow their desired learning pathways

R5   Reduce the variability in the quality of teaching across the school and strengthen the planning and provision for skills

What happens next

Since the school does not meet the standards required for registration, the Welsh Government will require the proprietor to submit an action plan within a specified period of time. This plan will set out the steps that the school will take to meet the standards, and the timescale within which it will complete each step.

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

Learning

Pupils at Sporting Chance face significant challenges in their learning arising from their social, emotional and mental health difficulties. In relation to their complex needs, most pupils make good progress in priority areas such as improving their well-being, the development of social skills, and in managing their behaviour. However, attendance issues impact the rate of progress of a few learners.

Nearly all pupils who attend the school regularly develop important social skills over their time at the school. For example, they enjoy each other's company and tolerate winning and losing well. They work well in a team and celebrate each other's achievements. At break times, most pupils socialise with peers and staff in the school café.

Many pupils generally listen well during lessons and respond appropriately to adults and each other. They follow instructions appropriately when required. Many pupils are able to talk suitably about their progress in football. They express themselves appropriately and use a narrow range of vocabulary.

Many pupils use subject specific vocabulary appropriate to their needs. For example, in maths lessons, many pupils use the terms multiple, factor, addition, multiplication and total accurately.

Many pupils improve their reading skills over their time at the school and develop simple comprehension skills. A few pupils enjoy reading for pleasure. For example, they read 'Joey Pigza swallowed the key' and relate this appropriately to their own lives. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop higher order reading skills, such as inference.

Overall, many pupils make suitable progress in their writing skills in relation to their starting points. For example, when they join the school, many pupils are able to write simple words and sentences. Over time, they develop their skills and generally write appropriately for different purposes. For example, they write blogs about how to make pitta pizza or chocolate and write short newspaper reports on the outbreak of the Second World War. A very few pupils write extended pieces of work. For example, they recount the voyage of Darwin to the Galapagos Islands.

A few pupils make good progress in developing their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills. However, for many pupils, these skills are underdeveloped. A minority of pupils use full stops and commas accurately. A few pupils are beginning to use apostrophes accurately and very few correctly identify similes.

A few pupils develop a sound understanding of the importance of communication skills in the workplace, for example the value of being able to 'have good chat' with customers in a shop.

Many pupils develop appropriate number skills and, over time and where appropriate, these become more relevant to real life contexts. For example, they shop for breakfast ingredients and budget for a planned menu. In sport sessions they use addition and multiplication to total reward points earned during the lesson.

Pupils develop their physical skills successfully through the strong focus on sport across the school. During sport sessions, most pupils also develop their self-confidence and resilience skills, for example as they learn to identify their stronger, dominant foot and focus on using their less dominant foot to help improve their performance in football.

Most pupils develop suitable creative skills. They produce evocative paintings of the Blitz and create cardboard models of castles in their history project.

Pupils' use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum is generally limited to word processing and simple presentation work. Opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills progressively across the curriculum are underdeveloped.

A very few pupils develop independent living skills such as the importance of hand hygiene and the need to keep surfaces clean.

A few pupils over the past academic year have achieved GCSE passes in English language and numeracy. Further, a very few pupils achieve valuable accreditation such as food hygiene and a construction skills certification. However, there is a very limited range of opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation at the school.

Many pupils leaving the school make suitable transitions to employment.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve at the school with national averages or to analyse the performance trends of groups over time because of the nature of the pupils' behavioural, social and emotional needs.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Most pupils at Sporting Chance respond positively to the nurturing school environment. They develop strong and positive relationships with staff, based on mutual respect and trust. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy to be at school. Over time, many pupils develop their confidence and resilience well through the effective support of staff.

Most pupils know who they can speak to if they have a concern. They feel supported by staff and treated fairly and with kindness.

Many pupils welcome guests to the school, greeting them politely and asking about their day. They know what is expected of them and many pupils are respectful and well-mannered to both staff and visitors.

During the inspection, the behaviour of most pupils attending the school was appropriate and in line with their additional needs. Most pupils understand and follow the behaviour policy well. They value the rewards that are available for their achievements. As a result, they understand how to regulate their behaviour and develop strategies to help themselves. This has a positive impact on their learning.

Many pupils display a positive attitude to learning, particularly through sport, but also in the classroom. Many pupils are happy to show their work to guests. They show pride in both their school and what they have achieved.

The majority of pupils within the school have infectious enthusiasm and are energetic during sport sessions. Many pupils develop their physical skills well, learn to be part of a team and develop social skills both with their peers and staff.

The majority of pupils enjoy participating in a limited range of charitable fundraisers. For example, a cake sale and car wash. However, there are restricted opportunities for pupils to be involved in the local and wider community or contribute in a meaningful way to the life of the school. As a result, pupils' development as leaders and as responsible, informed and active citizens is limited.

For those pupils where previous school attendance is available, many show improved attendance over their time at the school. Many pupils arrive at school promptly and in a calm manner. However, the low attendance of a few pupils has a negative impact on their progress, achievement and well-being.

Over time, many pupils develop their confidence and resilience well through the effective support of staff.

Teaching and learning experiences

Overall, the school provides a suitably broad and balanced curriculum, which supports pupils' well-being successfully. Curriculum plans demonstrate appropriate coverage of the areas of learning required in the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. However, a few aspects of the curriculum, such as science, technology and humanities, lack rigour and regularity.

The school has limited arrangements to develop pupils' personal, social and health education (PSE). For example, pupils develop their understanding of healthy lifestyles and regulating their emotions. They improve their understanding of the benefits of physical exercise through regular timetabled opportunities for sport and exercise in school. However, there is not an effective approach to the teaching of important issues relating to sex and relationship education.

The school provides a limited range of enrichment opportunities that reinforce the curriculum and supplement pupils' wider experiences. Teachers plan events and trips to enhance pupils' experiences. For example, they arrange trips to the National Folk Museum of Wales to deepen pupils' understanding of castles and the culture of Wales. In addition, they organise a range of engaging events, such as visits to a local bird of prey centre.

The school is beginning to develop effective partnerships with a limited range of local organisations. These links provide pupils with valuable opportunities to apply and

practise important skills outside the classroom. For example, older pupils attend a local farm where they learn to operate machinery, which helps to develop their independence and resilience and prepares them well for the world of work.

Teaching staff at the school know the pupils well. They foster trusting relationships with pupils and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Teaching staff establish beneficial routines and manage pupils' transitions skilfully. As a result, pupils are settled and ready to engage in their learning.

Support staff are delegated appropriately within lessons and encourage and motivate pupils well. As a result, many pupils are engaged in their learning and demonstrate positive behaviour.

Overall, curriculum plans deliver worthwhile activities that engage pupils' interests. However, learning experiences do not challenge pupils well enough. There is an overreliance on worksheets, which limits pupils' responses and hinders pupils' independence and extended writing skills. Further, learning experiences are limited by the relatively short school day.

Teachers generally plan learning experiences that build appropriately on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding in important skill areas as they move through the school. However, the school has not developed suitably progressive learning experiences for pupils to develop and apply their skills across the curriculum. Overall, opportunities to develop pupils' digital, creative and independent living skills are significantly underdeveloped.

Teaching is effective in a few lessons. In these lessons there is an appropriate balance between activities led by teaching staff and opportunities for pupils to work independently or in small groups to consolidate their learning. In these lessons, teachers monitor pupil progress and provide them with supportive and regular verbal feedback. They question pupils effectively to assess their understanding. However, overall, staff do not develop questioning enough to probe pupils' deeper understanding.

The school has limited arrangements to assess and to review pupils' progress. Teaching staff make suitable use of pupils' targets to support learning experiences in areas that are important for pupils. However, planning is not matched well enough to the individual learning needs of pupils.

In many lessons, feedback is appropriate. In these lessons verbal feedback is positive and moves learning forward. This cultivates an environment where pupils are confident to learn from their mistakes and to continue with their efforts and achievements. However, written feedback does not consistently identify what pupils need to do to improve their learning.

Care, support and guidance

Sporting Chance is a welcoming community where pupils feel safe and cared for. Over time, pupils develop trusting working relationships with the staff at the school. Staff are empathetic to the pupils' needs. As a result, many pupils improve their attendance and participation in learning consistently during their time at the school.

The school has a suitable focus on meeting the emotional, health and social needs of pupils. It provides opportunities for pupils to access engaging sporting activities to support their well-being and encourage them to engage in learning. However, the school does not monitor and evaluate the impact of these activities on pupils' well-being effectively enough.

Staff promote positive behaviour effectively. The school has clear behaviour management and reward systems in place. These are well understood by pupils. Pupils participate in ''peak and pit' activities, where they reflect on their behaviour that day. As a result, pupils learn how to manage their emotions and behaviour. The school has not established processes to record and monitor incidents of behaviour and identify particular patterns and trends. This limits the school's ability to evaluate the progress pupils make in improving their behaviour or identify issues across the school.

The school provides transport to and from school for most pupils. This has a positive impact on pupils' attendance and enables a smooth transition at the start of the school day. However, there are not currently robust processes in place to track and monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Pupils have very limited opportunities to contribute to decisions that affect their life in the school. The school has recently introduced opportunities for pupils to discuss their experiences at Sporting Chance with one of the directors. However, the ability of pupils to influence the work of the school or take on leadership opportunities is restricted.

The school produces a suitable baseline assessment of pupil attainment and well-being. However, this information is not used well enough to inform pupils' individual targets. Further, the quality of targets is not focused well enough on the pupils' objectives in their individual development plans (IDPs) or statements of special educational needs (SEN). Procedures to track and monitor pupil progress are underdeveloped. In addition, tracking and monitoring arrangements do not provide a clear enough picture of the progress pupils make over time.

Processes for ensuring that the school meets the individual learning needs of pupils, including the statutory reviews of statements of SEN or IDPs, are not robust. Staff are well trained to identify and support pupils with their emotional well-being and consistently provide pupils with the support they need. However, the provision and support for pupils' broader additional learning needs (ALN) are underdeveloped. Further, at the time of the inspection there were pupils on roll at the school whose primary need was outside the registration of the school.

The school's current provision for careers guidance does not provide clear enough advice on pupils' next steps. Guidance on which skills or accreditation pupils will need to access the world of work is underdeveloped. The strategic planning of careers advice and preparing for adulthood is in the very early stages of development.

There is an appropriate culture of safeguarding at the school. All staff undertake regular beneficial training to keep pupils and themselves safe. In addition, staff are trained in the use of an electronic system to record safeguarding concerns. The use

of this system provides consistency in reporting concerns. Any reports are monitored daily by the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and appropriate and timely actions taken in response to the concerns raised.

Leaders share weekly safeguarding updates with staff and understanding is checked termly through valuable questionnaires. These are used to identify any emerging areas of professional learning and enable the safeguarding team to respond promptly to needs as they arise. As a result, staff develop their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in responding to any safeguarding concerns promptly. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

Sporting Chance has a small staff team who work very efficiently together. Leaders have created a supportive and caring ethos where staff are committed to the school and its pupils. Although a minority of staff are relatively new to the school, they carry out their responsibilities with enthusiasm.

The headteacher and wider leadership team have developed a clear vision for the school to provide education through sport. These aims are shared and understood well by the school's community.

Leaders are highly visible around the school on a day-to-day basis and know the pupils well. They have high expectations for their staff and themselves. However their evaluation of the quality of the provision is not always accurate. Staff welcome their openness and know they can approach them if there is a problem. Leaders also provide access to a valuable employee assistance programme, which is appreciated by the staff team.

Leaders promote a culture of safeguarding successfully. The director with responsibility for safeguarding, together with support from the pastoral lead, ensures that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in this regard.

There is a limited calendar of self-evaluation and improvement planning activities that provide leaders with first-hand evidence about the school's work. Leaders have recently implemented a suitable programme of quality assurance activities, including learning observations, learning walks and book scrutiny. However, processes generally focus too heavily on routines or compliance instead of the impact that activities have, in particular on pupils' progress or skills. In addition, it is too early to judge the impact of these quality assurance processes and they have not yet started to feed into the school development plan.

There are limited whole-school systems in place to track, monitor and evaluate the progress pupils make over time. This restricts the ability of leaders to evaluate their work and identify key areas that require improvement such as the quality of teaching and learning, behaviour and pupil attendance.

The school's development plan identifies broadly appropriate areas for improvement. However, actions to achieve priorities are not detailed enough and do not specify resource implications and timescales clearly enough. Further, targets do not link well

enough to the information gathered as part of quality assurance exercises. These shortcomings mean that the school has not been able to take suitable actions to improve important aspects of its provision. In addition, the wider staff team do not have a clear understanding of the school priorities.

Members of the management board have identified broadly suitable areas for action for the longer-term strategic development of the school. However, overall, arrangements for the governance of the school are in the very early stages of development. Members do not monitor the school's progress closely enough, particularly with regard to standards of learning and the curriculum. As a result, the school has made slow progress against the recommendations from the previous monitoring visit.

The school has a full range of policies in place to support its work. Generally, these are comprehensive and contain useful information in relation to the policy area. However in a few cases, important policies linked to risk assessments and health and safety are not in place or are not robust enough. In addition, a very few policies refer to outdated statutory guidance, do not have sufficient regard to Welsh Government guidance and do not reflect the practice in the school.

There are regular, suitable opportunities for staff to discuss their well-being, performance and progress with leaders. Staff value these opportunities to raise issues and discuss their development needs. However, overall, performance management and appraisal targets are not precise enough. They do not enable the school to accurately assess progress, do not link well enough to the school priorities or focus effectively on raising standards and improving teaching.

Leaders promote and support the professional learning of all staff suitably. Staff gain valuable knowledge and skills in important and relevant areas such as behaviour management, well-being and additional learning needs. Staff value the opportunities provided by the school for professional learning and the opportunity to identify training which is of personal interest. The school has identified an appropriate range of professional learning for the staff team over the coming academic year. However, this training does not link well enough to the school improvement priorities. Formal evaluation of all professional learning is at the very early stages of development.

The directors have established beneficial links with the local authority to secure funding for all places at the school. This has strengthened the school's ability to plan strategically to make long-term improvements to the provision, including securing additional classroom space to widen the curriculum offer for pupils.

The school is not 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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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