



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

A report on

Ty Coryton

Date of inspection: February 2024

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Ty Coryton

Ty Coryton provides a specialist integrated day and residential service for children and young people between the ages of 8 and 19 years who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum condition (ASC), including challenging behaviour. The majority of pupils have severe learning difficulties. In addition, many pupils have speech, communication and language difficulties and around half of pupils do not communicate using speech.

There are currently 21 pupils on roll. All pupils have an individual development plan (IDP) or equivalent. Nearly all current pupils are placed by authorities in Wales and England. Around a third of the pupils are in the care of their local authority. The school is accommodated in a large mansion house on the outskirts of Cardiff and is administered by Orbis Education and Care. A very few pupils are resident in the Ty Coryton children's home that has separate purpose-built accommodation on-site.

The school was last inspected in January 2020. The school was fully compliant with all the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. Since then, there have been significant staff changes at the school. In addition, there are now very few pupils who attend the school from the on-site residential children's home. In response to the increase in day pupil numbers, there has been a rise in the numbers of learning support staff directly employed and managed by the school. During the monitoring visit in March 2023, the school met all the Independent School Standards (Wales) 2003 inspected during the visit.

Following a period of instability, a permanent headteacher joined the school at the start of the summer term 2023. She is an experienced headteacher from another of the Orbis schools in Wales. She is ably supported by an experienced deputy headteacher. There are 33 members of staff, five of these are teachers and the remainder are support staff.

Main findings

Strengths

The school provides a calm, nurturing environment and there are positive working relationships between staff and pupils based on trust and mutual respect. Staff know pupils' needs and interests well.

The safeguarding culture at the school is strong. Leaders monitor and review safeguarding processes effectively. Staff understand their responsibilities well and know how to keep pupils safe. Leaders establish effective processes to evaluate the work of the school. For example, they carry out learning walks and lesson observations and have implemented robust appraisal systems. They provide clear strategic direction to the school and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas of development.

Leaders support staff well-being successfully. For example, there are beneficial coaching and mentoring opportunities and a suitable system of supervision. This is impacting positively on the recruitment and retention of staff and on the quality of education.

Leaders provide a range of beneficial professional development for all staff. For example, in trauma recovery models, emotional regulation, and play-based learning. As a result, staff develop positive relationships with pupils and support their well-being successfully.

The school meets the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 evaluated during this visit.

Areas for development

The school is in the early stages of implementation of a new curriculum model. It is currently too early for the school to fully evaluate the impact of this model on the progress made by pupils and their preparation for the next stage in their life.

Activities in lessons do not always build progressively towards the learning intention. In addition, staff do not always use questioning and feedback effectively to support and challenge pupils. As a result, a minority of pupils do not make suitable progress in achieving their individual learning targets.

Recommendations

The school should:

R1 Evaluate and refine the new curriculum model

R2 Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous visit or inspection report

R1. Fully implement the revised curriculum model across the school

At the time of the last monitoring visit, the school was planning a transition to a new curriculum model in common with other Orbis Schools. After a period of staff training the new curriculum model was introduced in September 2023. This model uses a skills-based approach to teaching and learning and is taught through topics chosen in collaboration with pupils.

Staff are developing their understanding of the new curriculum model and their ability to assess the progress made by pupils using an achievement continuum. Planning for pupils focuses strongly on their individual skill development across the areas of learning. It is less clear how this detailed planning is underpinned by a clear curriculum plan to ensure pupil progress.

Overall, it is too early to assess the impact of the revised curriculum model on the progress made by pupils and how it prepares them for the next stage in their life.

R2. Ensure that external qualification pathways are strengthened to meet pupil need and are mapped across the curriculum model

The school has made suitable progress towards this recommendation. This academic year the school has become a registered centre for vocational qualifications and now delivers a range of courses, including essential skills in communication and application of number. All teachers have completed training in the delivery of these qualifications.

Currently, and when appropriate, a few pupils work towards PSE qualifications and essential skills in communication and application of number. These qualifications range from entry level 3 to level 1 and are planned through regular multi-disciplinary meetings to meet the need of individual pupils. In addition, and when appropriate, pupils have gained qualifications in basic food hygiene, fire safety and health and safety. However, the current curriculum model is at an early stage of development. Leaders have not fully integrated all qualifications and qualification pathways into the wider curriculum.

R3. Strengthen the consistency in the quality of teaching across the school environment

In nearly all classes, staff create purposeful and appropriately stimulating learning environments, which support pupils well. There are strong working relationships between staff and pupils. Staff know pupils needs and interests well and manage their behaviour effectively using a range of suitable strategies.

Since the last monitoring visit in March 2023, leaders have provided a range of beneficial professional development for all staff. This includes, for example, training on curriculum and assessment, the implementation of a new literacy programme, and

the development of vocational courses for older pupils. As a result, the school has begun to address strengthening the quality of teaching across the school.

Leaders have begun to introduce common approaches to planning which staff carefully adapt to meet the needs of individual learners. In addition, they participate in a range of useful quality assurance activities to evaluate teaching and learning. As a result, they have a robust understanding of the strengths and areas of development in teaching and learning. This is beginning to strengthen the consistency of teaching across the school. For example, in many lessons, staff plan activities that engage pupils well and relate to their individual interests. Support staff are deployed effectively and support pupils' learning and behaviour well. Many staff are developing their use of effective questioning and feedback. In these lessons, pupils generally make good progress towards their individual learning targets. In a few lessons, the learning intentions are not always clear, and pupils do not make strong enough progress towards their individual learning targets.

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 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 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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 6.

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 continued 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 (<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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publications Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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