



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

A report on

Dan y Coed

Date of inspection: January 2022

by

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

About Dan y Coed

Dan y Coed is an independent special school situated in the West Cross area of Swansea. The school opened in November 2017 and is part of the Orbis Education and Care group.

The school is in a large, detached property with easy access to the Mumbles coastline and the city of Swansea. The school shares the site with its residential provision, which provides a twenty-bed, 52-week provision which opened in May 2019.

Dan y Coed provides education for pupils aged 5 to 19 years who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder. In April 2019, the school applied to Welsh Government for a material change to the school's registration of pupil numbers from sixteen to thirty. Currently the school has twenty-five pupils. Twelve pupils are residential in the on-site care home and thirteen are day pupils. Nearly all pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and English as their first language. A round half of the pupils have looked after status. Pupils are placed at the school from local authorities in Wales and England.

The school's aim is to 'provide a safe and secure school environment that encourages individuality, confidence and self-esteem'.

The head of education has been in post since September 2017.

Main findings

Strengths

The safeguarding culture across the school is strong. Staff knowledge of the safeguarding procedures is supported effectively through a well-planned programme of professional development opportunities.

In relation to their very complex needs nearly all pupils make good progress in priority areas such as improving their wellbeing, the development of social skills, and in becoming more independent in their daily lives. Pupil behaviour across the school is well managed as staff are highly skilled in using preventative approaches to minimise pupil behaviour incidents.

The school provides a nurturing environment where nearly all pupils respond positively and thrive. The close collaboration between teaching staff and the on-site clinical team at the school provides an effective approach to meeting the needs of all pupils.

Nearly all pupils develop effective communication systems, which are strongly supported by the consistent approaches used by nearly all staff across the school. These communication systems are well supported through the collaborative working of the onsite clinical team.

The highly effective use of IT systems by staff across the school provides consistency in the recording, reporting and review of progress for all pupils.

The school's holistic approach towards pupils' individual personal development is a strength and enables pupils to acquire important life skills. Education, therapeutic, residential care staff and external stakeholders meet regularly to plan, review and monitor each pupil's progress. Outcomes from these meetings provide valuable information for the next steps for improvements in learning and behaviour of pupils.

The headteacher provides strong leadership across the school. Effective communication systems for staff strongly promote a culture of sharing of good practice and collaborative working, which effectively strengthens school systems. This strong team approach is successfully supporting the progress of pupils.

The learning environment is well maintained. Class areas are well resourced and provide a stimulating learning environment for pupils. Staff make good use of the onsite facilities and adapt the outside areas well to accommodate the needs of pupils.

The school meets all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 inspected during this visit.

Areas for development

The school provides a range of relevant external qualification pathways. Qualification pathways are based on the individual needs of pupils. Currently these qualification pathways for pupils are not fully mapped across the existing curriculum model.

Recommendations

The school should:

R1 Ensure that external qualification pathways are successfully mapped across the curriculum model.

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous visit or inspection report

R1. Evaluate the impact of the curriculum model

School leaders have effectively evaluated the impact of the revised curriculum model.

Robust processes are in place, which evaluate effectively the impact of the curriculum model. Implementation of the curriculum model is rigorously tracked and evaluated through a wide range of activities. These include termly lesson observations, pupil voice, and analysis of data on an individual, class and whole school level.

Evaluation of the curriculum changes indicate improvements for nearly all pupils. These include improved pupil engagement in learning and pupil outcomes. Increased group working in lessons is providing higher levels of peer and social interaction skill development, and pupil-led learning is greater across most classes. Nearly all pupils' emotional and personal wellbeing is improving with a reduction in the frequency and intensity of challenging behaviours recorded. Pupils can effectively transfer skills across a wider range of activities and contexts with improved confidence. Leaders report an improvement in the quality and consistency of teaching, which is evident through lesson observations.

R2. Evaluate the impact of the pupil tracking system

Leaders at the school have robustly evaluated the impact of the pupil tracking system.

The school has strengthened and further embedded its procedures for individual education plan (IEP) target-setting and monitoring and tracking pupils' progress. A valuable range of data is collected and used effectively by staff to monitor pupil progress and plan each pupil's individual curriculum offer.

The school undertakes initial and regular ongoing assessment of pupils' progress and needs using a bespoke comprehensive tracking system. These assessments provide teachers with a thorough understanding of pupils' abilities across all the areas of learning, including independent skills and behaviour. Generally, teachers are starting to make good use of the outcomes of these assessments to target priority areas of learning.

The pupil tracking system is used in conjunction with objectives from statements of special educational needs (SEN) or Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to inform detailed IEPs. These IEPs include a range of worthwhile targets for improvement across independence, learning, life skills and behaviour. Pupils' IEP

targets are reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain relevant. The increased emphasis on the development of pupils' independent living skills positively supports their readiness for transition to future destinations.

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 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 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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 7.

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 ([Estyn Site](#))

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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