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

A report on

Genus Education

Date of inspection: September 2022

by

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

About Genus Education

Genus Education was established in February 2010 as an independent special school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is administered by Genus Care Limited which currently operates five children's homes across South Wales. Genus Education provides education for children resident in four of the company's children's home who are not able to access mainstream education.

Currently, the school is registered for up to ten pupils between the ages of seven to eighteen years. There are currently three pupils on roll, one of which has a statement of special educational needs. All pupils are placed by local authorities in Wales.

The head of education has been in post since 2019 and oversees education across the four school sites. He is supported by a team of three teachers and care staff who are based in the residential homes.

The last full inspection by Estyn was in February 2016. The last monitoring visit was in March 2020.

Main findings

Strengths

Staff demonstrated dedication throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and worked flexibly to continue to provide education to pupils. This included adapting the structure of school terms to ensure continuity, and providing activities for pupils in holiday time as well as term time.

Pupils respond positively to the supportive ethos and effective strategies to support their social and emotional development. The school's thoughtful approach towards pupils' individual personal development is a strength and enables pupils to acquire important life skills and develop their self-esteem. Pupils are polite and courteous to staff and visitors.

Nearly all pupils make sound progress in their learning from their individual starting points. They develop their skills in areas such as literacy, numeracy and life skills and apply these appropriately.

Over time, nearly all pupils make strong progress in developing the skills they need to manage their behaviour and improve their engagement in learning. As a result, many pupils are able to re-integrate successfully into mainstream education.

Areas for development

The school is strengthening its procedures for target-setting and monitoring pupils' progress. Staff are starting to collect a valuable range of performance data suitably to track and monitor pupil progress and plan timely interventions. The use of this data to identify pupils' next steps in learning is in the early stages of development.

The school has a broad range of relevant policies such as anti-bullying, educational visits and safeguarding children to support the work of staff. Generally, these are comprehensive and contain useful information in relation to the policy area. However, a few policies are too generic and do not reflect the particular context of the school well enough. Overall, a few policies do not have sufficient regard to Welsh Government guidance for education.

Recommendations

The school should:

R1 Continue to develop and strengthen arrangements for tracking and monitoring pupil progress

R2 Ensure that policies reflect the most recent Welsh Government guidance for education

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous visit or inspection report

R1. Provide a school wide scheme of work for personal and social education to complement the therapeutic model operating in the care home settings

The school has made appropriate progress towards meeting this recommendation.

The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme covers important topics such as healthy relationships, independent living skills, personal safety, and emotional wellbeing. A strong feature of the programme is its flexibility to respond swiftly to individual pupils' needs as they arise. For example, care and education staff meet regularly with an educational psychologist to discuss pupil behaviour and progress. Following these meetings, the education team tailor the programme for individuals to consider any emerging issues. The PSHE curriculum reflects the needs and interests of the pupils and allow flexibility in the pathways offered as they progress through the school.

A comprehensive commercial personal development programme has been recently introduced for all pupils in Years 10 and 11, which is available as appropriate for younger pupils. Pupils access this programme within school and the care home, with a member of staff from the education team co-ordinating the delivery of the curriculum. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this initiative.

R2. Reduce behaviour breaks during teaching time to develop pupils' resilience

Overall, the school has responded suitably to this recommendation.

Staff have high expectations of pupil engagement and progress. They plan and deliver activities that are appropriate to the needs of the child.

Staff know their pupils well and have positive working relationships with pupils, which helps pupils to behave well and apply themselves to their work. Overall, pupils engage enthusiastically and enjoy their learning experiences. Over time, they develop trust in staff and show perseverance in their learning. During this monitoring visit, pupils managed their behaviour effectively, showed resilience, and engaged with activities for extended periods of time.

The school's systems for building engagement and positive behaviour are effective. As a result, there has been an overall reduction in the instances of pupils requiring behaviour breaks within lessons, and increased pupil engagement since the time of the last inspection.

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 the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

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 (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:

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Publication date: 23/11/2022