

**A report on**  
**Westward House School**

**Glenover House  
Scarrowscant Lane  
Haverfordwest  
Pembrokeshire  
SA61 1ES**

**Date of inspection: April 2025**

**by**

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

## About Westward House School

Name of provider	Westward House School
Proprietor status	Westward House School, a private limited company
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent ALN Specialist
Residential provision?	No
Number of pupils on roll	21
Pupils of statutory school age	21
Date of previous Estyn visit	06/11/2023
Start date of visit	08/04/2025

### School context:

Westward House provides education for up to 35 children and young people aged between seven and eighteen years who have specific learning difficulties. These include dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, as well as learning difficulties associated with autistic spectrum condition (ASC) and attention deficit disorder. In addition, the school educates pupils who do not have a specific learning need but whose parents choose the school as an alternative to local state provision. For example, a few pupils attend on a part-time basis where parents have elected to educate their child at home.

There are currently 21 pupils on the school roll, the majority of whom are in Year 11, their final year of school.

Since the core inspection in November 2023, Westward House has experienced a period of instability in its leadership team. The school is currently without a lead teacher, and the proprietor is acting as headteacher with support from the school manager of the sister school in Cardiff. The team at Westward House comprises four full-time and three part-time members of staff.

At the time of the inspection in November 2023 the school did not meet the requirements for the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. The Welsh Government asked the school to produce a post-inspection action plan to address

the areas of non-compliance. To comply fully with these requirements, the school was required to address the issues identified below for each standard:

### **Standard 1 – The Quality of Education**

The proprietor should ensure that:

- a written policy on the independent school's curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively, [2(1)(a)]
- the written policy, plans and schemes of work—
  - take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an individual development plan or a statement,
  - do not undermine the fundamental values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and
  - take into account the principles in Part 1 of the Convention [2(1)(b)]
- the school's curriculum provides the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress, including providing differentiated opportunities where appropriate, and i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life [2(2)(h)]

The proprietor should ensure that the teaching:

- ensures pupils are enabled to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught [2(3)(a)]
- involves well-planned lessons, effective teaching methods, suitable activities and wise management of learning time, [2(3)(c)]
- demonstrates a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils and ensures these are taken into account in the planning of lessons [2(3)(d)]
- demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and uses information from those assessments to plan teaching so that pupils can progress, [2(3)(g)]

### **Standard 3 – The welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The proprietor ensures that:

- arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the independent school, a written policy to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils is drawn up and effectively implemented, and those arrangements and that policy have regard to any relevant guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers. [6]
- a written behaviour policy is drawn up and effectively implemented that encourages and rewards good behaviour, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour and has regard to any relevant guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers, [11(a)]
- a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour. [11(b)]

The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy. [15]

### **Standard 4 – The suitability of the proprietor and staff**

- the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person— (i)the person’s identity, (ii)the person’s medical fitness, (iii)the person’s right to work in the United Kingdom, and (iv)where appropriate, the person’s qualifications, [20(2)(d)],
- before a person offered for supply by an employment business begins work at the independent school the person’s identity is checked by the proprietor of the independent school (irrespective of any such check carried out by the employment business before the person was offered for supply [21(2)(c)]

In September 2024, the school relocated to its current premises, the former Castle School site, which was also owned by the proprietor. A small number of staff transferred over to work at Westward House after the closure of Castle School.

A team of HMI visited the school in May 2024 and October 2024 to discuss the school’s progress against their action plan. Subsequently, HMI visited the school in April 2025 to evaluate the school’s compliance with the previously non-compliant Standards.

## Main findings

Relationships between pupils and staff are positive, supportive and professional. These are a notable strength of the school. As a result, most pupils maintain high levels of engagement during lessons and behave well. Staff have consistent expectations of pupil behaviour and have established sound classroom routines that create a calm, positive environment suitable for learning.

The school has taken comprehensive steps to address previous shortcomings in safeguarding. The safeguarding policy is robust and aligned with current Welsh legislation and guidance. It provides clear procedures, including those for managing referrals, allegations and online safety. The designated safeguarding person (DSP) demonstrates a secure understanding of their responsibilities and oversees a coherent system for recording and monitoring concerns. Staff are well informed about procedures, and safeguarding is reinforced regularly through staff training.

Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are completed for staff in line with statutory requirements and records are well maintained. As a result, safer recruitment processes are sound.

The behaviour policy is clearly structured and underpinned by restorative and relational approaches, which are well embedded across the school. It successfully promotes a positive ethos and includes defined rewards and a graduated system of sanctions.

The school has clear protocols for managing medical incidents, emergency medication and hygiene. These are supported by improved documentation and strengthened monitoring of staff training. The first aid policy has been revised and now includes practical, role-specific guidance for staff.

Overall, the school has established a secure culture of safeguarding that supports pupils' well-being effectively.

The school provides pupils with a bespoke academic programme that reflects their interests and abilities. For example, pupils may study Entry Level qualifications and/or GCSEs and IGCSEs. However, these individual programmes are not consistently supported by suitably detailed or progressive schemes of work. As a result, the curriculum is not cohesive, and leaders do not have a secure overview of subject coverage or the progressive development of pupils' skills over time.

Although there is a whole-school approach to assessment and tracking pupil progress, leaders do not make effective use of this information. As a result, while small steps of progress are evident within lessons, leaders are not able to demonstrate pupils' progress over time. In addition, the school does not monitor the important progress that pupils make in areas such as well-being, attendance, engagement and confidence.

Teachers are dedicated and hardworking and act in the best interests of their pupils. They know their pupils very well and plan lessons that provide opportunities for learning and progress. However, in a few cases activities do not offer sufficient challenge for more able pupils. In addition, planning does not always focus well enough on meeting the needs of pupils with additional learning needs.

Since the core inspection, the school has experienced a period of significant change, including changes in leadership, the relocation of the school site, high staff turnover and a shift in the nature of the pupil cohort. These changes, together with the absence of formalised quality assurance processes, limit the school's capacity to drive improvement effectively.

Although the school has made significant improvements to many aspects of the provision since the core inspection, important aspects of the curriculum planning still do not meet requirements. As a consequence, Westward House School continues to be non-compliant with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

## **Compliance with the standards for registration**

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. 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 meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the proprietor should ensure that:

- a written policy on the independent school's curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively, [2(1)(a)]
- the written policy, plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an individual development plan or a statement [2(1)(b)]

### **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

This Standard was not considered on this visit.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

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

### **The suitability of proprietors and staff**

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

### **Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools**

This Standard was not considered on this visit.

**The provision of information**

This Standard was not considered on this visit.

**The manner in which complaints are to be handled**

This Standard was not considered on this visit.

**Recommendation regarding continued registration**

The school does not meet the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.



## 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 (Wales) Regulations 2024. 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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

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