

A report on

Birribi

**Unit 14-15 The Old School Estate
Station Road
Narberth
Pembrokeshire
SA67 7DU**

Date of inspection: May 2025

by

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

About Birribi

Name of provider	Birribi
Proprietor status	Birribi Ltd
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent special
Residential provision?	Yes
Number of pupils on roll	7
Pupils of statutory school age	7
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	{PreviousInspectionDate}
Start date of inspection	14/05/2025

School context:

Birribi is an independent school, which provides additional learning provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties, autistic spectrum condition (ASC) and associated learning difficulties. It opened in April 2016 as part of a wider organisation that also provides residential care and a care farm used by pupils at the school. The school operates from two classrooms attached to two of the company's children's homes in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire.

The company aims to provide an integrated therapeutic approach across home and school, which promotes pupils' well-being and helps them to improve their life chances and become confident, independent members of the community. The school provides education for up to ten pupils aged seven to eighteen years resident in the company's children's homes who are not able to access mainstream education.

All pupils have an individual development plan (IDP). Currently, there are seven pupils on the school roll. All of the pupils are looked after by the local authority and are placed by local authorities in Wales.

Summary

Birribi provides a calm and purposeful learning environment for pupils. Staff know the pupils extremely well and have a deep understanding of their social, emotional and behavioural needs. Relationships between pupils and staff are a strength of the school.

Nearly all pupils at the school are polite and welcoming to visitors. Nearly all pupils show high levels of respect to staff and their peers.

Pupils respond positively to the high expectations staff have for behaviour. Staff effectively use verbal praise to support pupils with their learning. Most pupils are highly engaged in their learning and respond well to verbal feedback. As a result, pupils know how to progress in their tasks.

Staff in the school highly value the voice of pupils and gather their opinions through weekly 'community meetings'. Recently, pupils have been sharing their opinions on the redesign of the garden area.

The school is in the early stages of implementing the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and therefore it is too early to evaluate the impact of this work.

Leaders have implemented important quality assurance process for monitoring teaching and learning activities. However, quality assurance of other areas of the school are in the early stages of implementation and it is too early to assess its effectiveness.

The school meets the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

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 2024. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

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

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

The suitability of proprietors and staff

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

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

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

The provision of information

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

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

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

Recommendations

We have made two recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1. Actively promote and embed knowledge and understanding of Part 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child across the school
- R2. Sharpen self-evaluation processes and quality assurance mechanisms to focus on all aspects of the school

What happens next

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 evaluation

Birribi provides a nurturing and supportive environment for pupils. Relationships between pupils and staff are a notable strength. Staff know the pupils very well and have a strong understanding of their social, emotional and behavioural needs.

Nearly all pupils show high levels of respect and are welcoming to visitors. They behave positively towards staff and their peers.

Pupils demonstrate effective communication and oracy skills. For example, they write extended pieces of work, read them aloud to others and respond to questions about their choice of topic.

Most pupils are highly engaged in their learning. For example, in science lessons delivered through creative play, pupils demonstrate resilience, teamwork and effective problem solving skills, showing determination to persevere and complete set tasks. Nearly all pupils develop their literacy skills well, for example through descriptive writing activities that support the creation of digital animation. In addition, the school's 'Welly Award' programme effectively promotes pupils' independence, while also supporting the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.

Staff use continuous verbal praise effectively and have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils understand how to make progress in their learning. Further, pupils feel listened to and valued.

The school actively seeks the opinions of pupils through weekly community meetings. Recently, pupils have been involved in discussions about the on-site garden development project, enabling them to contribute to the design.

Pupils also participate in weekly enterprise sessions, where items are sold in the local community. As a result, most pupils develop their understanding of the world of work and budgeting skills.

The school is in the early stages of embedding aspects of the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into the curriculum. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of this work.

The school has recently strengthened its leadership team with the appointment of a lead practitioner with responsibility for teaching and learning. Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous improvement.

The school has clear, well-established quality assurance processes in place for the monitoring of teaching and learning. However, quality assurance of the wider aspects of the school are at an early stage of implementation.

The school meets the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous inspection

R1. Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations

Since the time of the core inspection in 2022, the school has made appropriate progress in responding to the areas of non-compliance. In June 2024 HMI visited the school to evaluate the school's compliance with the previously non-compliant standards. At the time of this visit, HMI evaluated compliance against the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 and found no evidence that the school did not comply fully.

R2. Strengthen leadership by improving self-evaluation and improvement planning processes at the school

Since the core inspection in 2022, the school has appointed a new headteacher and recently promoted a lead practitioner.

Leaders have strengthened self-evaluation and quality assurance mechanisms to identify strengths and areas of development, with a particular focus on teaching and learning. They carry out regular learning walks, book scrutiny and pupil voice activities, which have contributed to curriculum review and the implementation of a new assessment framework. As a result, pupils demonstrate progress in their learning from their starting points.

The wider organisation holds monthly multi-disciplinary team meetings, involving members from the therapy, residential and school team, as well as the proprietor. As a result, a more integrated approach to meeting the needs of pupils is in place.

In addition, the organisation has recently reviewed its governance processes and quality assurance approach. However, self-evaluation and quality assurance mechanisms to support improvement planning in other areas of the school are at an early stage of development, and too early to evaluate their impact.

R3. Identify and implement suitable accreditation pathways

Since the last inspection, the school has identified suitable learning pathways, which meet the needs of pupils currently on roll.

These pathways are based on a varied range of qualifications that suitably align and support areas of the school's curriculum and pupil interests.

The school works effectively with other learning providers and agencies to support pupils to return to mainstream education, where appropriate. Over the current academic year, a very few pupils have successfully transitioned back to mainstream education, where appropriate.

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

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. ‘*most pupils...*’ or ‘*very few pupils...*’. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

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

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