

**A report on**

**Craig Y Parc School**

**Heol y Parc  
Pentyrch  
Cardiff  
CF15 9NB**

**Date of inspection: July 2025**

**by**

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education**

**and Training in Wales**

## About Craig Y Parc School

Name of provider	Craig Y Parc School
Proprietor status	Ambito Care and Education which is a division of Salutem Healthcare.
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent special
Residential provision?	Yes
Number of pupils on roll	34
Pupils of statutory school age	32
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	{PreviousInspectionDate}
Start date of inspection	01/07/2025

### School context:

Craig Y Parc is an independent school for pupils from age 3 to 19 years. The school is situated alongside Ty Cwtch registered children's home, which provides residential care for six young people. Currently, there are 34 pupils on roll at the school. All pupils have individual development plans (IDPs), statements of special educational need (SEN) or education, health and care plans (EHCP). A few pupils are care experienced children.

The school provides education for pupils with a wide range of complex physical needs and associated learning difficulties. These include cerebral palsy, dysphagia, autistic spectrum condition and epilepsy.

The school's proprietor is Ambito Care and Education operating under the parent company Salutem Healthcare, which provides services for young people and adults with complex support needs. Many pupils at the school are placed by authorities in South Wales. A few pupils are placed by authorities in England.

The current headteacher took up her post in June 2024 is supported by an executive leadership team including director of education and director of curriculum and Safeguarding. The leadership team are supported by a team of five teachers, three HLTAs, four teaching assistants, twenty seven learning support staff, a business

manager, an assistive technology manager, pupil advocate, a positive behaviour support assistant, two school nurses, and a therapies team of five staff including full-time speech and language, occupational and physiotherapy. Currently there is one vacancy for the position of class teacher. Since the time of our last visit there have been staffing changes across all levels of the school team, including the director of education.

The school did not meet the Independent School Standards during its core inspection in March 2024. However, following a period of follow-up, it was evaluated as compliant in July 2024.

## Summary

Craig y Parc is a caring school where most pupils form positive relationships with staff and peers, and benefit from group learning and social support. Staff understand pupils' interests and adapt to encourage engagement. Leaders have begun revising the curriculum to meet complex needs, although implementation is at an early stage. Therapy teams support communication and life skills, however strategies are inconsistently applied by the wider staff team. The new leadership team is developing evaluation methods, though current systems restrict how accurate and effective these evaluations can be. The quality of teaching is too variable, impacting pupil progress. While the school promotes the UNCRC, pupils' awareness is limited due to complex needs and lack of explicit references to the convention.

### **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 that the school does not comply with this Standard.

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

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this Standard.

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

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this Standard.

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

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this Standard.

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

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this Standard.

### **The provision of information**

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this Standard.

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

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this Standard.

## **Recommendations**

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

- R1. Strengthen the quality of teaching and learning experiences to consistently meet the needs of all pupils
- R2. Strengthen quality assurance processes to ensure that leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development
- R3. Fully embed the United Nations Convention Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into the curriculum

## **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

Craig y Parc is a welcoming and caring school. Nearly all pupils develop positive relationships with staff and their peers. When provided with suitable opportunities they work effectively in small groups, socialise positively and provide support and encouragement for each other.

Staff develop positive relationships with pupils based on a secure understanding of their interests. They work flexibly to support pupils to slowly improve their engagement in learning.

Since the time of our last visit, leaders have made changes to the school curriculum to meet the range of pupils' complex learning needs. This is in the early stages of implementation. For example, the school nurse is beginning to support with the delivery of an individualised PHSE curriculum for learners. However, the consistent use of community-based learning to support pupil progress is underdeveloped.

The school benefits from the support of a therapy team including speech and language, occupational therapy, physiotherapist, nursing staff and positive behaviour support. These staff provide beneficial support and guidance on how to meet the diverse needs of learners. Further, they deliver regular group and individual sessions linked to important areas of learning, such as communication, self-regulation and independent living skills. However, the use of recommended strategies by all staff to meet pupils' communication needs is inconsistent across the school.

Since the time of the last visit, there have been changes to the school leadership structure. New leaders are beginning to develop a range of strategies to evaluate practice at the school. For example, they review pupils' attendance and progress against targets, and complete internal audits and learning walks. However, overall, school systems are not sufficiently robust to allow leaders to easily access information to evaluate practice accurately. Further, leaders' self-evaluations of the school's performance in a few areas are overly generous and do not align fully with the available evidence.

In the most effective lessons, teaching is delivered with pace and clarity, and is matched to the needs and starting points of the pupils well. However, across the school, there is variability in the quality of teaching. Where teaching is less effective, lessons lack challenge or pace, which limits pupils' progress.

Although the school promotes the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), due to the complex needs of the pupils, explicit references to the convention are limited. As a result, pupils' awareness of the UNCRC itself is underdeveloped.

## **Progress in addressing recommendations from previous inspection**

### **R1. Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, specifically relating to Standard 1 'The Quality of Education'**

Leaders have made suitable adjustments to the curriculum and learning experiences planned for pupils. For example, pupils regularly enjoy lessons in the school grounds, such as growing vegetables in the polytunnel. Further, the school now provides opportunities for pupils to gain a range of appropriate accreditation. During their time at school nearly all pupils make secure progress in developing their learning and skills.

Since the time of the last visit to the school, there have been further changes to the curriculum offer, and, as a result, many changes are still in the early stages of implementation.

### **R2. Ensure that professional learning addresses the professional development needs of teachers and learning support staff**

Since the time of the core inspection, leaders have started to strengthen the professional learning offer for teachers and learning support staff. This includes a wide range of professional learning focused on meeting the health and well-being needs of pupils in important areas such as dysphagia, manual handling and safeguarding.

Further, leaders have started to use support available within the wider parent organisation to develop the staff team. For example, through shared literacy events or drawing on the expertise of specialist teachers.

Staff benefit from professional learning developed by the large therapy team at the school, in areas such as in communication or physical needs.

However, newly appointed and agency staff have not benefitted from this same professional learning offer. As a result, the impact of this professional learning is inconsistent.

### **R3. Ensure that the learning environment and resources meet pupils' complex needs**

Since the last core inspection, the school and wider organisation has made significant investment into improving and enhancing the learning environment and resources. As a result, the learning environment is more accessible for pupils with complex needs and enables opportunities to enhance their learning through a wider range of activities. For example, providing ramps and surfaces to ensure that all pupils can access the gardening area, and developing accessible outdoor gym equipment.

#### **R4.Improve relationships with parents**

Since the time of the core inspection, there have been staffing changes at all levels at Craig y Parc school. New leaders have implemented a suitable range of activities to develop positive relationships with parents. For example, they share weekly and termly newsletters with the parent group to share key dates and what each class has been working on.

Leaders have started to involve parents more in the life of the school, for example through whole school events, such as the school fete, or through parents' evenings. However, there is limited evaluation of the impact of these initiatives.

## **Evidence base of the report**

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from parent/carers 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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