

A report on

Caban Aur

**Llanbedrgoch
Anglesey
LL76 8NX**

Date of inspection: February 2026

by

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

About Caban Aur

Name of provider	Caban Aur
Proprietor status	Afon Goch Children's Homes Ltd
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent special
Residential provision?	Yes
Number of pupils on roll	2
Pupils of statutory school age	2
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	12/02/2025
Start date of inspection	02/02/2026

School context:

Caban Aur is a small independent school owned by Afon Goch Children's Homes Limited, a private limited company. It is set in its own grounds, in a rural setting on Ynys Môn, surrounded by a nature reserve.

The school is registered for up to two pupils aged 11 to 16 years who have a range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There were two pupils on roll at the time of the inspection.

The school's additional learning provision consists of individual therapeutic interventions, very small class sizes, a high staff to pupil ratio, a bespoke curriculum and regular social and emotional learning through activities such as outdoor education.

The headteacher was appointed in January 2026 having previously worked at the school as a teacher from 2024.

Summary

Ysgol Caban Aur places a strong focus on pupils' well-being and provides high levels of individual care and support. Staff work closely with the linked residential home and communication between school and the home is very effective. Pupils benefit from trusting relationships with staff, which helps them re-engage with learning after disrupted educational experiences. Over time, pupils show improved attendance and engagement representing sound progress from their starting points.

The school offers a broad curriculum. Outdoor education is a particular strength, with pupils taking part in regular activities like climbing, hill walking and paddle sports. These experiences build confidence, resilience and teamwork. However, the school does not yet effectively plan, capture and share the impact of outdoor learning well enough across wider skills such as literacy and numeracy.

Teaching is a strength of the school. Staff know pupils' emotional needs extremely well and plan engaging lessons.

The school has assessment and tracking systems, however staff do not consistently use them which limits their ability to plan the next steps in learning effectively or make informed decisions about the progress pupils are making in line with their abilities. Support for pupils with additional learning needs is inconsistent because staff are not always familiar with the provision outlined within the statutory individual development plans (IDPs). Qualification pathways are also underdeveloped, meaning pupils are at risk of leaving without recognised qualifications needed for future education or employment.

Safeguarding arrangements are not robust. Policies to safeguard pupils are not sufficiently detailed and lack useful information for staff. Further, the implementation of these policies is inconsistent.

Limited improvement due to frequent changes in leadership and insecure governance have slowed progress, and the school has made limited improvement since previous inspections. The new headteacher is still developing the school's vision, and systems for monitoring, accountability and compliance are not yet strong enough.

The proprietor is committed to the school and aware of the very limited progress the school has made. Further, proprietorial oversight and governance arrangements are not sufficiently robust.

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

Main evaluation

Ysgol Caban Aur places a strong emphasis on pupils' well-being and care staff from the linked residential home report highly positive communication with the education team. Pupils benefit from high levels of individual support from the staff team. Staff are responsive and committed to recognising pupils' interests and abilities while providing appropriate challenge. Over time, pupils show improved engagement and attendance and, given their disrupted starting points, this represents sound progress. Pupils demonstrate increased enjoyment of learning and more positive attitudes to school.

Curriculum and learning experiences

The school provides a broad and suitable curriculum that reflects its therapeutic context and places an appropriate emphasis on well-being, relationships and personalised learning. For example, pupils have the opportunity to experience learning activities in horticulture, financial awareness and design technology in addition to core subjects.

Outdoor education is a notable strength of the school. Pupils benefit from a well-established team of instructors and take part in regular, timetabled, outdoor learning each week. Activities such as indoor climbing, hill walking, navigation and paddle sports provide rich experiences that develop resilience, teamwork, communication and confidence well. Pupils can also gain evidence-based certificates and access external accreditation through outdoor education partners. However, outcomes from outdoor learning are not captured or shared systematically enough with the school. As a result, the impact on pupils' wider skills, including literacy, numeracy and social development, is not integrated fully into whole-school assessment and progression planning.

The school makes effective use of a designated garden area to support outdoor learning. This space is well kept and provides meaningful opportunities for pupils to plant seeds, build planters and plan crop rotations. These activities support pupils' practical skills and well-being and create natural opportunities for informal discussion with staff, which helps to strengthen relationships and engagement.

The school's qualification pathways for pupils remains underdeveloped. The school is not an examination centre and relies on external arrangements, which restricts pupils' access to recognised qualifications and limits leaders' ability to plan coherent accredited routes. As a result, pupils remain at risk of leaving the school without the qualifications they need to progress to further education, training or employment.

Pupils are encouraged to take an active role in the wider school community through regular celebratory events held throughout the year alongside staff and young people from the attached residential home. These events, such as beach-based activities and arts

and crafts festivals, provide valuable opportunities for pupils to showcase their skills and achievements. For example, pupils performed a puppet version of Cinderella to an audience. This provided valuable opportunities for pupils to adapt characters for the script, developing the set for the performance and working as a team.

The school fosters a valuable awareness of the wider world of work by considering a variety of different careers. Education staff tailor opportunities appropriately to pupils' changing interests. The school actively promotes positive links with the local community. Pupils take part in planning events for local residents, which provide worthwhile work experience opportunities. For example, pupils have organised a tea party and plant sale using produce grown through their gardening lessons. These activities help pupils to build confidence and develop practical skills. In addition, this work supports pupils to develop a stronger appreciation of the local area and fosters a sense of belonging within the school community.

Teaching

Teaching is a strength. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and build trusting relationships that support pupils to re-engage with learning following disrupted educational experiences. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge across a range of areas, including English, mathematics, humanities, science and technology, art and personal and social education. As a result, pupils benefit from a wider curriculum offer than might be expected in such a small setting.

Teachers plan lessons effectively to engage pupils in their learning. Resources are used well to support revision and re-cap prior learning. Further, teachers use probing questions effectively to support the development of pupils' oracy skills.

Assessment and tracking processes are developing but are not yet sufficiently embedded in all subjects to support consistent progress planning across the curriculum. Tracking systems are in place, but teaching staff do not yet use assessment findings consistently enough to inform next steps in learning.

Support for additional learning needs (ALN) is not sufficiently secure. Leaders and education staff are not familiar enough with the content of pupils' statutory individual development plans (IDPs) and, as a result, cannot be assured that the full range of additional learning provision (ALP) is implemented consistently. Teachers' planning does not routinely reflect statutory ALP expectations closely enough. Overall, inconsistencies in statutory planning, documentation and oversight limit leaders' ability to secure a shared understanding of pupils' needs across the provision.

Teachers establish clear and consistent expectations for pupils' work and ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to produce written work across a range of subjects.

Pupils' books contain a variety of tasks and different methods for recording work, reflecting the breadth of experiences staff plan for them. Feedback is generally provided orally and immediately, in line with the school's assessment policy, with more extended pieces of writing often supported by detailed written comments, where relevant. As a result, pupils' have a sound understanding of how to improve their work. Teaching staff foster a positive and supportive classroom environment, which encourages pupils to take part in lessons and sustain engagement throughout the school day.

Safeguarding

Close collaboration between school, the residential home and therapists contributes effectively to consistent support for pupils' emotional and behavioural needs. However, the arrangement is overly informal and the respective roles and responsibilities of education and care settings are not consistently clear. At times, this lack of clarity and understanding blurs accountability and reduces the effectiveness of joint working.

Safeguarding practice is not consistently secure. Leaders' oversight of safeguarding arrangements, including staff training and related processes, is not sufficiently robust.

Overall, inconsistencies in safeguarding and recruitment practice mean that the school does not meet the Independent School Standards.

Leading and improving

Over the last five years, frequent changes in leadership at the school have impacted significantly on the school's ability to implement and sustain improvements. As a result, the school has made inadequate progress against the recommendations from the last few inspections.

The headteacher is very newly appointed, works part time and is in the very early stages of developing their vision for the school. Leaders wish to strengthen systems and improve practice, but do not yet have a clearly articulated plan or documented long-term vision that is shaping priorities consistently across the provision. Strategic direction is at a very early stage of being translated into coherent plans that will support sustained improvement.

The school's processes for quality assurance, accountability and monitoring are not established clearly enough. Leaders do not yet have a robust approach to evaluating teaching, assessment or curriculum effectiveness. Arrangements for performance management and professional challenge lack clarity and structure.

The proprietor demonstrates strong commitment to the school and its therapeutic model that brings together education, care, therapy and outdoor learning for the benefit of the

pupils. However, proprietorial oversight and governance arrangements are not sufficiently robust. Recruitment and appointment processes for the headteacher have been informal and induction and structured support have been limited. Safeguarding oversight also lacks rigour, for example inconsistent record-keeping arrangements that does not ensure sensitive information is stored and monitored systematically. In addition, the proprietor has not ensured that the school building is maintained consistently in line with statutory health and safety requirements.

Overall, while leaders and the proprietor demonstrate commitment to improvement, leadership and governance systems remain underdeveloped and are not robust enough to provide sufficient assurance of regulatory compliance or the sustained improvement required to address longstanding weaknesses.

Leaders' understanding of the independent school regulatory context is not sufficiently secure. The school does not meet with the Independent School 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

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure the written policy, plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an IDP 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)]
- Ensure the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress, including providing differentiated opportunities where appropriate, and effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life [2(2)(h)]
- Ensure that teaching 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)]

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

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 school should:

- Ensure that the school actively promotes knowledge and understanding of Part 1 of the Convention [4b]

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets some of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure a written policy to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils is drawn up and effectively implemented [6(b)]
- Ensure all staff, supply staff, volunteers and pupils receive appropriate training in the independent school's safeguarding policy in accordance with any guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers in relation to safeguarding [10(a)]
- Ensure a written record of that training is maintained. 10(b)]
- Ensure that a written behaviour policy is drawn up and effectively implemented that—
 - (i) encourages and rewards good behaviour,
 - (ii) sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour,
 - (iii) has regard to any relevant guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers [11(a)]
- Ensure that bullying at the independent school is prevented so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.[12]
- Ensure 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]
- Ensure that admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with regulations made under section 434 of the 1996 Act(1). [17]
- Ensure that ensures that the policies and strategies required by this Part are reviewed regularly and updated when appropriate, and [18a]
- Ensure that the school maintains a written record of when each policy and strategy has been reviewed and updated. [18b]

The suitability of proprietors and staff

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 school should:

- Ensure where relevant to any such person,
 - (i) a DBS certificate has been obtained in respect of that person, or
 - (ii) where that person is registered with the DBS up-date service, a check is made of the person's DBS certificate status. [20 (2)(e)]

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure that the water supply meets the requirements of the school premises regulations [27a]
- Ensure classrooms allow effective teaching and do not compromise health and safety [27j]
- Ensure lighting, heating and ventilation in classrooms and other parts of the independent school are satisfactory in accordance with the school premises regulations, [27p]

The provision of information

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure where a pupil with an individual development plan or statement is registered at the independent school, the independent school must provide such information to the local authority as may reasonably be required for the purpose of a statutory review of the individual development plan or statement. [28(8)]

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.

Safeguarding

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils give cause for concern.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Strengthen the management of safeguarding and address the shortcomings identified during the inspection
- R2 Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024
- R3 Clarify responsibilities of leaders and strengthen capacity to provide strategic direction and oversight
- R4 Improve the rigour and effectiveness of quality assurance processes in order to strengthen provision and raise standards
- R5 Ensure there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation in line with their abilities

What happens next

Since the school does not meet the standards required for registration, the Welsh Government will require the proprietor to submit an action plan within a specified period of time. This plan will set out the steps that the school will take to meet the standards, and the timescale within which it will complete each step. Welsh Government may then request Estyn to support the school through an improvement process.

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

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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