



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Kinsale School

Date of inspection: March 2012

by

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



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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

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Context

The Kinsale School Service offers an integrated residential education and care package to pupils, with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder, aged between eight and nineteen years. The pupils generally have a high level of need with associated behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Pupils attend the school on a full time, 52 weeks a year basis. If necessary, an individualised package between 38 and 52 weeks a year can be arranged. There are 25 residential places and five places for day pupils. Respite and emergency care is not available. The mix of children is risk assessed as required.

The service aims to provide a caring structured and homely environment, specifically designed to meet the needs of these pupils. Each pupil has an individual learning programme, provided in an atmosphere of high expectations, where they are valued for themselves. The school's overall objective is to create the ideal conditions for each pupil to succeed. It aims to help pupils achieve to the maximum of their potential and receive the preparation that they need to live as independently as possible in order to have a fulfilling adult life.

Summary

The school's current performance	Excellent
The school's prospects for improvement	Excellent

Current performance

Kinsale is an excellent school because:

- pupils achieve excellent standards across the school;
- teaching is excellent;
- there is excellent provision for pupils' health and wellbeing;
- staff management of pupils' behaviour is exemplary;
- the school has outstanding systems for tracking and analysing information about pupils' progress;
- pupils receive excellent care, support and guidance; and
- the school has strong partnerships.

Prospects for improvement

The school has excellent prospects for improvement because:

- the headteacher provides strong, dynamic leadership;
- the leadership team have a very clear vision for the school, which is shared by all staff;
- there is an excellent culture of rigorous self-evaluation that leads to school improvement;
- staff performance is managed very carefully;
- staff are very well trained; and
- the school manages its resources well and provides value for money.

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 2003. 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 meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The provision of information

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, the staff and proprietors of Kinsale school should:

- R1 give pupils more opportunities to develop and use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum;
- R2 further develop provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the school;
- R3 improve the equipment in the small playground area; and
- R4 make sure that all staff consistently adhere to the recently introduced security measures.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare two written case studies, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Excellent

Standards: Excellent

All learners are severely autistic with highly challenging behaviour, and there is great variation in their learning ability. Pupils almost always come to this school because previous placements have been unable to meet their exceptionally complex needs.

In this context, it is not possible to compare the school's performance with national averages, as there is no benchmark data available. Pupils' attainment and achievement have to be judged on an individual pupil basis, and relative to the performance of similar schools, of which there are very few.

In relation to their prior attainment, pupils' achievement is excellent. All pupils make very good progress in developing social, communication and independence skills and in learning to make sense of the world around them. As a result, they successfully achieve their individual learning targets in school and, where appropriate, in the community. Older and more able pupils gain accredited ASDAN awards for a wide range of achievements in literacy, numeracy, social and life skills, physical skills and outdoor education.

Pupils make good progress in developing reading, writing and numeracy skills at levels appropriate to their ability. More able pupils enjoy reading, choose books and write simple accounts of their activities. Less able pupils develop their awareness of books and stories well, and make good progress in recognising important social signs in the community.

Pupils progress well in numeracy. They develop and use their early mathematical skills well in creative and practical activities and in outdoor education.

A few pupils use ICT well. However, most do not have enough opportunities to develop ICT skills as well as they could.

Pupils make appropriate progress in Welsh in relation to their needs and linguistic backgrounds.

The school has a very positive impact on the longer-term outcomes for pupils. On leaving school, a few of the more able pupils progress to mainstream college courses and others to specialist residential provision of a similar kind. Parents report that the school transforms their sons' and daughters' lives and makes a profound difference to their future prospects. More able learners confirm this view.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Pupils feel safe and enjoy school. Parents are confident that their children are very well looked after. Every pupil has a champion who is a senior manager and acts as an advocate for them when required. This champion ensures that pupils' learning and social needs are met.

Due to the high level of trust they have in school staff, pupils are keen to try new tasks and accept change more readily. As a result, they gain in self-confidence. They make informed choices about eating healthier food and enjoy taking part in a wide range of physical activities.

Pupils are fully engaged in all lessons and activities. Those who are not able to communicate verbally use objects of reference and the picture exchange communication system to express their views and take part. They respond very well to instructions and improve their levels of concentration over time. Pupils are proud of their work and they respond enthusiastically to positive feedback and praise.

Pupils with the most complex needs benefit from the recent introduction of the sensory programme. The programmed activities help them to reduce their anxiety and to become calm and ready to settle to their work.

Pupils have very detailed written profiles, which make sure that all staff clearly understand their likes and dislikes and their individual needs, including their preferred methods of communication. As a result, pupils receive a consistent approach from all staff and know what to expect.

Attendance and punctuality are good, unless pupils are ill. Due to the very well-planned and focused support across the school and care setting, pupils generally behave very well. Pupils with the most challenging behaviour learn to co-operate over time and manage their anger and anxiety. They learn to work alongside others well.

Pupils take part in a wide range of activities in the local community, through the ASDAN programme and arranged visits. They enjoy joining another school to take part in an exciting programme of activities planned by Forest Schools. Meeting their peers and trying out new activities help them to develop their self-confidence and social skills.

Pupils have very good opportunities to make decisions about school life through the School Council. They have influenced the use of leisure activities and food on offer in the bistro.

Wherever possible, pupils learn to become more independent. Pupils benefit from individual programmes that prepare them very well for life in the community and for moving onto further learning or other appropriate settings.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Excellent

Learning experiences: Good

The school provides all pupils with good quality learning opportunities that enable them to develop valuable skills for later life. It makes excellent provision for pupils to develop social and communication skills. Each pupil has a detailed communication profile to guide this work.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations in full.

The school provides pupils with good learning experiences in literacy, numeracy, knowledge and understanding of the world, ICT and creative development. All pupils benefit from good quality personal, social and health education, religious education and physical education.

The outdoor education curriculum makes a particularly strong contribution to pupils' wellbeing. Pupils who were previously too anxious to take part in activities such as shopping, hill-walking and picnics now benefit from these experiences. In this way, pupils increase their confidence, develop physical skills and increase their tolerance for new situations, thus helping to prepare them for the challenges of life beyond school.

Provision for literacy and numeracy is good. Pupils develop and practise early reading, writing and mathematical skills in all lessons. However, the school does not have specific policies or staff training for literacy and numeracy. Senior managers have identified this as an area for further development of teaching and learning.

A majority of pupils do not have enough opportunities across the school to develop ICT skills as well as they might.

Welsh language provision is developing well across the school. The inclusion of Cwricwlwm Cymreig contributes well to pupils' understanding of the cultural context of Wales. Pupils take part in the celebration of St David's day and in the Eisteddfod.

Pupils help to take care of the local environment. These opportunities include litter-picking, using recycled materials in art projects, gardening and working in the local heritage park.

Teaching: Excellent

The teaching at Kinsale is excellent. Teachers' planning is exemplary. Planning is carefully linked to the very thorough initial and on-going assessment and to the pupils' comprehensive individual education and behaviour support plans. This rigorous planning provides specific activities that help pupils achieve their individual targets. Staff give pupils very clear instructions and break their tasks down into small manageable steps.

Teachers plan stimulating and interesting learning activities, including sensory experiences, that engage and challenge pupils. Teachers and learning support assistants work very well together to plan and deliver lessons in a very supportive environment. All staff make very good use of a wide range of augmentative communication, including signs and symbols, to develop pupils' communication skills very well. As a result, all pupils are fully involved in all lessons.

All staff manage pupils' behaviour very well. They use a wide range of flexible approaches to make sure pupils are fully engaged throughout the school day. They make excellent use of detailed behaviour support plans, which identify triggers for

poor behaviour and strategies to avoid incidents. They are vigilant at all times and remain composed in difficult situations. As a result, pupils feel secure, decrease their anxiety and remain calm.

The school has excellent systems for tracking, analysing and recording information about pupils' progress. Wherever possible, pupils work with staff to reflect on and record how well they have learned. Staff capture pupils' very small steps of progress so that they can build on these achievements. The school liaises very effectively with parents through regular meetings, phone calls and log books.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

Pupils receive excellent individual care, support and guidance from all staff.

The school makes excellent use of a wide range of specialist services to support pupils' health and wellbeing. All staff recognise the importance of communication and regularly and accurately assess how pupils develop these skills.

Pupils' personal development is promoted very well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All pupils take part in an appropriate personal and social education programme including sex and relationship education.

Pupils have good access to therapies, such as speech and language and counselling, a visiting psychiatrist and a paediatrician and the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. This includes support from Welsh speaking professionals where necessary.

The school's provision for supporting pupils with highly challenging behaviour and decreasing their anxiety is exemplary. The school works closely with educational and clinical psychologists to provide all staff, and many parents and carers, with high quality training. As a result, staff plan and implement very detailed behaviour support programmes. These programmes are consistently implemented across the school. This is sector-leading practice.

The school fully meets pupils' additional learning needs. Individual education plans identify appropriate learning targets and useful strategies, which are used consistently by all staff and reviewed regularly. These plans link very well to the thorough assessment of pupils' abilities and needs. All staff work together very effectively to set, monitor and evaluate these individual targets. Transition arrangements are detailed, thorough, of a high quality and valued by parents.

Staff make good use of comprehensive risk assessments that are updated regularly. The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The school has an inclusive ethos where diversity is recognised, respected and celebrated. All pupils have access to a curriculum that is appropriate to their individual needs. There are clear policies in relation to discrimination and equality.

The physical environment of the school enables staff to provide many suitable activities to meet the different needs of individual pupils. The quiet uncluttered environment supports well those pupils who have specific needs by reducing their levels of anxiety. Where appropriate, displays include tactile and visual objects of reference.

There is a wide range of suitable learning resources within the school building. The school has recognised the need to develop resources for the small outside playground area.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Excellent
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Leadership: Excellent

The headteacher provides strong, dynamic leadership. She is well supported by a very effective senior leadership team. Together they have a clear strategic vision that is shared by all staff across the school and the children's home.

Communication throughout the school is very good at all levels. Staff are regularly consulted and kept well informed about the school's comprehensive policies and plans.

Senior leaders and curriculum leaders support and challenge colleagues effectively and communicate very high expectations to staff. They have developed an exceptionally inclusive ethos that enables care and education staff to work consistently well together to improve outcomes for pupils. This team work is an outstanding feature.

Members of the board of executives effectively oversee the progress and development of the school. They are supportive and challenge the school to raise standards of achievement and improve the quality of education. The school benefits from termly visits by the school's improvement partner and has recently achieved National Autistic Society accreditation.

Staff performance is very carefully and regularly monitored and evaluated through an effective performance management system. All staff feel valued and contribute well to school planning and improvement.

Leaders use the performance management and appraisal procedures very effectively to identify whole school training and development needs. As a result the school is able to meet the individual and specific needs of all pupils.

The school meets the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Improving quality: Excellent

The process of self-evaluation is excellent and very firmly embedded in the school, and all staff contribute fully and effectively. The school seeks and values the views of parents and carers and uses a wide range of useful evidence to support its evaluations. The self-evaluation report is based on first hand evidence and

incorporates the views of external consultants such as the school improvement officer and the review undertaken by the National Autistic Society.

As a result, leaders have an honest and accurate view of the school and identify well the strengths and areas for improvement. The school improvement plan is detailed and links closely to the self-evaluation report.

The school has very effective systems in place for managing performance. Regular classroom observation by leaders and the school improvement partner provide teachers with valuable written feedback and clear actions for improvements. There are good opportunities for peer observation for teachers, tutors and learning support assistants.

There is a strong culture of professional development. This is highly effective in improving the wellbeing, behaviour and attainment of pupils. Staff attend a very wide range of highly appropriate courses. The school has set up valuable networks of professional practice with schools within the company, other schools, local special schools and a local college.

The school continuously develops its own data to inform school improvement. It can accurately identify each individual pupils' progress over time in order to make sure that every pupil reaches his or her potential.

The school has made very good progress in addressing the recommendations of the annual inspection visits.

Partnership working: Good

The school has well-developed partnerships that have a very positive impact on outcomes for pupils. The school works very closely with local authorities to manage the transition into and out of school. This makes sure that pupils and their parents and carers do not become more anxious than they should be.

The school works very closely with parents and carers to make sure that there is a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour and meeting their needs. Parents and carers feel that the school understands that they know their children very well and have valuable information to share.

The effective joint working with a local mainstream school significantly enriches pupils' learning opportunities in the community. Staff are developing curriculum links and opportunities for sharing provision. This partnership also helps pupils at the mainstream school to gain understanding of disability and the needs of others.

The school organises regular public seminars on topics relating to autism. These provide a valuable insight and support for parents, carers and professionals into the care and management of these pupils.

Close working with the Forest Schools project widens opportunities for pupils and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' wellbeing and development of their social and life skills.

The school and the local college share information well so that everyone understands the changing circumstances of the pupils. As a result, they can jointly make informed risk assessments about including pupils on college provision.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its resources effectively and has an appropriate range of specialist teachers and tutors with relevant knowledge and experience.

Staff are very well trained in a range of oral, visual and sign-based communication methods, and consistently use the approach that is correct for each pupil. Support staff are very well deployed and make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning experiences and to the quality of their care and guidance.

Spending priorities and training programmes link closely with the school's improvement plan and are reviewed regularly. Teachers receive appropriate planning, preparation and assessment time. Class teams have daily allocated time to work together to organise and plan each lesson. As a result, all staff know how every pupil will access the learning and the experiences that match their abilities and needs. They use these sessions very effectively to review the learning and to plan improvements.

The school has introduced very useful additional security measures to keep staff and pupils safe. However, these measures are not yet consistently used across the school.

The school's financial management is robust. The company manages resources to support and improve the quality of the learning environment well, for example by investment in the fabric of the buildings and resources such as the adventure play park.

Resources are of good quality and are well matched to the interests and abilities of the pupils. Spending is planned and monitored carefully to address whole-school priorities.

As a result of this excellent financial management, the school provides value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Ten parents responded to the questionnaire. All responses were very positive. All agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the school, and that their child likes the school and was helped to settle in well. Almost all strongly agreed that the teaching is good, that their child makes progress and is safe in school, and that pupils behave well. All agreed or agreed strongly that staff treat pupils with respect, expect them to take on more responsibility and encourage them to be healthy and take regular exercise, where appropriate. All thought that pupils receive good support and are encouraged to be more mature. They all felt comfortable with approaching the school. A few parents disagreed with the statement that their children were well prepared for moving onto the next school, college or work.

Two learners responded to the questionnaire. Their responses were positive and they agreed with all the statements above including that they are well prepared for moving onto the next school, college or work.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Claire Yardley	Reporting Inspector
Meinir Rees	Team Inspector
Caroline Rees	Team Inspector
Sue Willan	Peer Inspector
Paul Scudamore	Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003: 3 and 5
Christine Dooley	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FPYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms

Core subject indicator (CSI)	This relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum.
Level 1	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade D to G.
Level 1 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade D to G.
Level 2	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade A* to C.
Level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C including English or Welsh first language and mathematics
Level 2 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C.
Level 3	This represents the equivalent of an A level at grade A*-E.
Level 3 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to two A levels at grade A* to E.
Average wider points score	This includes all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the relevant age, for example at aged 16 or at aged 18.
Capped wider points score	This includes the best eight results from all qualifications approved for use in Wales at aged 16.
Proprietor	The term 'proprietor', as defined in the Education Act 1996, means the person or people responsible for managing an independent school and can include a sole proprietor, governing bodies, trustees or directors. The ways that independent schools are governed and owned varies a great deal. A proprietor or trust may own a school or the school may have a governing body that appoints a headteacher. Some schools have a combination of these.