



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on:**

**Cardiff Steiner School  
Hawthorn Road West  
Llandaff North  
Cardiff  
CF14 2FL**

**Date of inspection: April 2016**

**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:

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

Cardiff Steiner School is a co-educational independent day school situated in Llandaff North, on the outskirts of Cardiff. The school opened as a primary school in August 2012 for pupils aged from 3 to 11 years. In 2014, the school extended the age range to enable pupils to continue their Steiner education through to age 14 years.

The school is a member of the Steiner Waldorf Schools' Fellowship and follows the group's worldwide curriculum. It aims to take account of the academic, physical, emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual development of the whole child. Pupils start formal learning at age 6.

There are 66 pupils on roll. These include 30 pupils in the kindergarten aged from 3 to 6 years and 36 pupils in the lower school from rising age 7 to 14 years. There is little difference in the number of boys and girls although the balance varies in class groups across the school. Most pupils live in Cardiff and the surrounding area. Many of the older pupils attended the kindergarten class and have re-joined the school since it opened in 2014, following a period of education elsewhere. A few of these pupils had been home-schooled.

About 12.5% of pupils come from minority ethnic groups. A very few pupils speak English as an additional language and no pupil speaks Welsh as a first language at home. The school identifies 15% of pupils as having additional learning needs. None has a statement of special educational needs.

The school's leadership and management are shared between three groups, each of which has a specific area of responsibility. These groups are a board of trustees, a school management group and the college of teachers.

The school is a charitable company limited by guarantee.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

The current performance of the school is adequate because:

- Most pupils develop good standards in developing their speaking and listening skills
- Most younger pupils develop strong mental and oral numeracy skills and many older pupils use these effectively in oral and project work
- Almost all young and many older pupils engage well in their learning, are motivated and behave well
- Many older pupils who are new to the school make good progress in settling into the school's routines and their attendance improves
- There is an appropriate balance of formal and practical activities in line with the Steiner Waldorf curriculum guidance
- Nearly all pupils develop their creative, design and wider learning skills particularly well through craft activities
- In classes for younger pupils, teachers plan well to meet the learning needs of individual pupils
- The revised policy and procedures to improve pupils' behaviour are beginning to have a positive impact
- The school is a fully inclusive community with a caring ethos that is based firmly on traditional family values and the Steiner Waldorf philosophy

However:

- Overall, pupils' standards in written work across the curriculum are too variable
- A few older pupils show poor behaviour
- In a minority of lessons for older pupils, teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are too low and the challenge of work is too variable
- Teachers do not all plan well enough to meet the learning needs of individual pupils
- Pupils have limited opportunities to influence decision-making in the school

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- The trustees and staff show strong commitment to the school and have worked together successfully to establish the school as a cohesive community
- The school's management structure distributes strategic and functional responsibilities appropriately across different groups of staff and trustees
- There are suitable performance management arrangements that identify

appropriate areas for staff professional development

- The trustees act successfully as supporters and critical friends of the school, providing appropriate balance between their challenge and support roles
- The school's management team and trustees know the school well and have an accurate picture of its strengths and areas requiring improvement
- The school has a strong and effective partnership with its parents

However:

- Leaders and managers do not focus enough on how the quality of teaching impacts on pupils' engagement with their learning and the standards they achieve
- In the school's improvement plans, the focus on how the priorities identified will improve pupils' outcomes is not strong enough
- Overall, the school has made variable progress on the key areas for action identified in Estyn's follow-up to registration visit to the school in July 2013

## **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 does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets most/almost all of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should ensure that teaching:

- Enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught. [1(3a)]
- Shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils and ensure that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons. [1(3d)]

### **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

- R1 Comply fully with the regulations for registration
- R2 Raise standards in key stages 2 and 3
- R3 Improve the quality of teaching and assessment in the lower school to match best practice within the school
- R4 Improve strategies to support pupils with additional learning needs
- R5 Ensure that performance targets at all levels link closely to pupil outcomes

### **What happens next?**

Since the school does not meet the standards required for registration, the National Assembly for Wales 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

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

#### Standards: Adequate

Many pupils joined the school's kindergarten class at a young age. Other pupils have joined the school at different ages. Overall, current pupils have a wide range of abilities and previous educational experience.

From a young age, most pupils develop good standards in developing their speaking skills. They enjoy making conversation with each other during their play that extends their vocabulary when they discuss their games and create imaginary scenes. Many older pupils are confident, articulate speakers who express their views well and like to explain their tasks to visitors. Almost all pupils develop these skills particularly well as they move through the school. For example, in key stage 3, many pupils learn to ask probing questions when beginning a new topic that demonstrate their engagement in the subject. Overall, most pupils listen well to the teacher and each other when the topic catches their imagination.

Pupils begin formal learning at age 6 and follow the Steiner main lesson routines in their class with enthusiasm. Almost all of them show good progress in building on their previous learning, for example when they recite rhymes and juggle beanbags to reinforce their counting skills. Most of these pupils develop good mental and oral numeracy skills but find written number tasks more difficult. They begin to develop writing skills at a slow pace by practising the formation of letters and numbers. At this stage, they record very little work in books.

Across the school, standards in reading are variable. Young children in the kindergarten enjoy looking at picture books and following a story. In particular, they listen well in the daily story-telling session, which helps them to develop concentration and extend their vocabulary. At age 7, most pupils begin to learn phonic strategies to decode words effectively. By the end of key stage 2, a majority of pupils make good progress in reading. More able pupils read fluently and with expression while others are at an earlier stage.

In key stages 2 and 3, most pupils learn to improve their written work effectively by redrafting. In the best examples, a few pupils produce well-presented project work that demonstrates a good understanding of the topic and includes an appropriate range of technical vocabulary. For example, pupils in upper key stage 2 produced good quality work for their topic on Italian art in the Renaissance. However, overall, pupils' standards in written work vary too much. Pupils do not write at length often enough and they copy too much work. They do not all develop a strong enough understanding of writing for different purposes. A few less able pupils do not make enough progress in using basic punctuation and most pupils' work in exercise books is untidy.

In key stage 2, pupils use their numeracy skills effectively in oral and project work, for example when they weigh and measure ingredients or follow eurhythmy routines.



However, across the lower school, pupils do not make enough progress in developing their numeracy skills in mathematics main lessons so that they can apply them in subjects across the curriculum. For example, a few older pupils struggle to make basic mental calculations such as dividing three digit figures in half. Most pupils' recording of mathematics work is too careless.

A minority of pupils in key stages 2 and 3 have additional learning needs. Although more able pupils usually respond well to the challenge of main lesson project work, they do not pay enough attention to developing basic skills, so work in their other books does not always reflect their ability. Other pupils with additional learning needs sometimes find the task too demanding and lose interest. As a result, they do not always engage in or complete the task.

Overall, boys and girls make similar progress.

### **Wellbeing: Adequate**

Pupils generally feel safe in school and have positive attitudes to healthy living and eating. Many of them believe that the school responds well to incidents of bullying and are aware of the support procedures available.

Most pupils are punctual and their attendance is good. Many older pupils, who have joined the school having found it hard to remain in education, make good progress in settling into the school's routines and enjoy the activities, and as a result their attendance has improved.

Almost all young and many older pupils engage well in their learning, are motivated and behave well. They display pride and confidence in their work. However, in a few lessons, most often where classroom management and planning are weak, a few older pupils show poor behaviour and disrupt their learning and that of others. This does not enable them to make the progress of which they are capable.

Almost all pupils enjoy participating in physical activity out of doors. Nearly all of them engage enthusiastically in events in the local community where they participate in activities such as local festivals to support their learning. Older pupils have been particularly successful in supporting younger pupils through setting up and running a school library. However, pupils have limited opportunities to influence other aspects of decision-making in the school. Although pupils enjoy a wide range of organised trips and outings that enhance their learning, they have few occasions to participate in extra-curricular clubs.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>
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<b>Adequate</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Adequate**

The curriculum meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. It provides pupils with an appropriate balance of formal and practical activities as set out in the Steiner Waldorf curriculum guidance. This guidance provides teachers with clear long-term planning strategies. In the early years, there is a focus on learning through play with formal education commencing at age six years. Before this, pupils have the option of part-time kindergarten attendance.

In the lower school, the main two hour lesson each day provides pupils with good opportunities to study a class project in depth for a three week period. These projects encompass practice in a range of skills. The school often provides valuable opportunities for pupils to gain first-hand experience. For example, all key stage 3 pupils visited Rome as part of their project on the Renaissance. In other lessons, pupils develop a range of useful practical skills. Pupils develop their creative, design and wider learning skills particularly well through craft activities. For example they show independent thinking, perseverance and resilience in making products in different natural materials such as wool, copper, leather and wood.

However, the playground is small for older pupils to have enough exercise and, although they visit the local park, there are too few opportunities for them to take exercise off-site.

The school places appropriate focus on developing pupils' Welsh language skills and promotes Welsh culture and history well through music, stories and festivals.

There is a strong and effective focus on education for sustainable development, through gardening and recycling projects.

However, the lower school is at an early stage of planning effectively for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. This means that planning for progression across the school and within each class is not always robust enough. For example, in individual lessons, planning does not always take enough account of pupils' learning needs so that, too often, whole-class tasks are not appropriate for everyone.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

The overall quality of teaching is too variable. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in understanding the Steiner Waldorf curriculum guidance and ethos. They use the guidance effectively to plan interesting projects that engage pupils. Teachers of the younger pupils plan well to meet the learning needs of individual pupils.

In the best practice, teachers manage the pace of the lesson skilfully to suit the activity. They use tone of voice and open questioning effectively to engage pupils. As a result, where pupils are stimulated by the lesson, this helps them to develop the ability to ask searching questions that extend their own knowledge and understanding. A majority of teachers develop effective professional relationships with pupils. They know pupils well and establish successful routines that maximise pupils' opportunities for learning.

However, in a minority of lessons for pupils in key stages 2 and 3, teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are too low and the challenge of work is too variable. Tasks are not tailored well enough to meet the needs of everyone in the class. As a result, a few older pupils do not sustain their concentration because work is too easy or misbehave because they do not understand or enjoy the activity.

The school is developing a system to assess pupils' progress but it is at an early stage. Teachers provide useful oral feedback to pupils, although there is little written marking to tell pupils how they could improve.

The school provides useful lengthy, detailed annual reports to parents about their child's studies and performance.

### **Care, support and guidance: Adequate**

The school has effective arrangements to support pupils' health and wellbeing. These contribute well to pupils' development and help them to show care for others. There are appropriate arrangements to deal with any incidence of bullying.

The school has implemented a range of initiatives to improve attendance and punctuality and these measures are beginning to have a positive impact. This is notable where pupils have had a previous history of non-attendance at school. The school supports pupils to develop their social skills and to relate to others with tolerance and respect. Pupils in older classes understand the revised policy and procedures to improve behaviour. However, a minority of teachers do not implement the strategies consistently. As a result, there is not enough balance between sanctions and positive reinforcement.

There are suitable opportunities both within and outside the curriculum that promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, pupils visit different faith-based groups and celebrate key festivals. Pupils have good opportunities to make a range of visits that impact positively on their cultural development.

The recently appointed additional learning needs co-ordinator is developing useful procedures to identify, make provision for, and monitor those pupils who need support. Information about these pupils' needs is shared appropriately with relevant staff. Individual development plans for a few pupils identify suitable learning targets and the school is developing a suitable system to review these more regularly.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school is a fully inclusive community with a caring ethos that is based firmly on traditional family values and the Steiner Waldorf philosophy. There is a clear emphasis on fairness, celebrating diversity and consideration for others that is endorsed appropriately in all aspects of school life.

Overall, the school's accommodation provides a suitable, well-maintained and safe learning environment, which supports teaching and learning effectively. Classrooms are well-decorated and give the school a homely feel. There are suitably designated outdoor areas for younger pupils, with appropriate resources. The school community has been successful in improving the external environment by building a few raised beds, planting trees and introducing a grass 'hill' to add interest to the tarmac

playground. The school generally has suitable resources that are well matched to most pupils' needs, including access to various technologies to support pupils' work, for example in craft lessons.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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**Leadership: Adequate**

The trustees and staff show strong commitment to the school. They have worked together successfully to establish the school as a cohesive community. This includes creating a shared sense of purpose and vision, based on nurturing the whole child and fostering a love of learning.

The school's revised management structure distributes strategic and functional responsibilities suitably across different groups of staff and trustees. The structure is collegiate in approach and is underpinned by an effective cycle of meetings. This helps the smooth day-to-day running of the school and enables all staff to contribute to shaping the school's future direction. For example, different 'mandate' groups such as the college of teachers or upper school development group provide appropriate opportunities for staff and trustees to share information and influence plans for improvement. These groups are well-supported by the recently established school management team, which makes a positive contribution to school improvement strategies. However, overall, the groups do not have a strong enough emphasis on reviewing performance in important areas of the school's work. In particular, there is too little focus on how the quality of teaching impacts on pupils' engagement with their learning and the standards they achieve. As a result, in a minority of lessons, pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.

All staff have job descriptions specific to their role and these are used aptly as part of the school's performance management arrangements. These arrangements provide a suitable basis for identifying professional development needs that relate to whole-school and faculty priorities. However, for individual teaching staff, targets for improvement are not specific enough and often do not relate to the impact on pupil outcomes.

The trustees provide strong direction for the school's work. They know the school and understand how their roles relate to it extremely well. Through their useful structure of mandate groups, the trustees oversee all aspects of the school's work diligently. They act successfully as supporters and critical friends of the school, providing an appropriate balance between their challenge and support roles. Together with the school management team and wider mandate groups, the trustees play a pivotal role in determining the school's strategic direction and realising its vision.

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

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The school's management team and trustees know the school well and they have an accurate picture of its strengths and areas requiring improvement.

Since Estyn's last visit to the school in July 2014 the school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen its self-evaluation and planning arrangements. This includes introducing an annual timetable of self-evaluation activities such as systematically evaluating the work of mandate groups and collecting the views of parents and staff to inform improvement planning. However, this is not fully developed or embedded in all aspects of the school's work. For example, currently, there is no system for monitoring the impact of the quality of teaching on learning through the scrutiny of pupils' work and there is no formal process to take account of pupils' views.

The school has an established system for undertaking regular lesson observations, which is overseen by the college of teachers mandate group. The group members meet weekly as part of improvement planning to support each other and reflect on what works well and how to improve their own practice. The whole process is quality assured by a peer mentor from the school's Steiner Waldorf Schools' Fellowship 'sponsor' school. This makes a positive contribution towards improving consistency in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, and in sharing best practice. However, individual lesson observation reflections, evaluation comments and targets for improvement do not focus well enough on linking the quality of teaching to its impact on pupil engagement and the progress they make during the lesson.

The school's self-evaluation report is a comprehensive and candid document, which identifies areas for development in detail. This is used in an informed way as the basis for the school's three-year and annual improvement plans. Both improvement plans show clear and appropriate links to the self-evaluation report, including priorities for improving leadership practice and the quality of teaching and learning. However, in each of these plans the focus on how the priorities identified will improve pupils' outcomes is not strong enough.

Overall, the school has made variable progress on the key areas for action identified in Estyn's follow-up to registration visit to the school in July 2013. For example, progress towards developing a robust assessment policy that enables the school to know how well all pupils are doing has been very limited, with almost all aspects awaiting attention. In contrast, the school has made strong progress in developing suitable self-evaluation arrangements that fully engage all stakeholders, and inform school improvement priorities.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school's arrangements for partnership working make a positive contribution to improved outcomes and provision for pupils, and to the wide range of valuable development opportunities for staff.

The school has a strong and effective partnership with its parents. Many parents, and often their child's extended family, are directly involved in the school's work. They successfully undertake volunteer roles ranging from running a library through to

listening to readers, and cleaning and maintenance tasks. This is in addition to organising and participating in fundraising events and holding their own choir, which meets weekly at the school. These types of activities show the strong commitment of parents to their child's education and their support in helping the school to grow and improve. As a result, the school is a close-knit community, with a shared understanding of its aims and philosophy, which has a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

The school benefits greatly from its partnership with other schools in the Steiner Waldorf Schools' Fellowship, both in the UK and Europe. This includes opportunities for pupils to visit other schools as part of curriculum activities and for staff to attend training events or meetings. Often, the purpose of these events is to share best practice in many important areas of the school's work, from the administrator's role through to classroom practice.

The school's strong engagement with its local community provides increased opportunities for improving provision for pupils, often through enhanced networking and also through increased fund raising. For example, the school runs twice weekly parent and toddler groups, which are used by over 40 families, and it has hosted the Llandaff North Festival and pop-up cinema events.

#### **Resource management: Adequate**

The school manages its resources prudently and to good effect.

Staff are deployed suitably to deliver the curriculum appropriately. All class teachers have experience of teaching in other Steiner Waldorf Fellowship schools and they hold teacher training qualifications from the Steiner Waldorf movement, although only a few have qualified teacher status.

All staff benefit from a wide range of professional development opportunities. These are identified appropriately through the school's performance management system and reflect whole-school and individual priorities. In particular, the college of teachers' and Steiner Waldorf Fellowship school mentoring scheme for all staff is helping to drive forward the sharing of good practice, within a strong culture of collaborative learning.

The school's business manager, together with the support of the administrator and trustees, monitors the school finances robustly. Expenditure is budgeted carefully and linked directly to school priorities.

The school makes suitable use of its resources to provide adequate outcomes for pupils and provides value for money.

## Appendix 1

### The inspection team

Rosemary Lloyd Lait	Reporting Inspector
Denise Wade	Team Inspector
Paul Scudamore	Independent School Standards (Wales) Inspector
Jane Goodwin	Peer Inspector
Miranda Knight	Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, 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.