



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

A report on

**The Bridge Alternative Provision Portfolio PRU
Bryncethin Campus
Abergarw Road
Brynmenyn
Bridgend
CF32 9NZ**

Date of inspection: March 2017

by

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

Summary

Pupils respond positively to the supportive, positive and nurturing environment provided by the PRU and, over time, nearly all pupils make valuable progress in their learning, confidence and wellbeing. The majority of pupils in Year 11 achieve a suitable range of GCSE qualifications or equivalent and a minority achieve level 2 qualifications in vocational courses. However, outcomes for pupils that access alternative education provision organised by the local authority are generally poorer than those achieved by pupils that attend the PRU. Nearly all pupils are polite and courteous and learn to show respect to each other, staff and visitors. The quality of teaching is good. The caring, supportive ethos created by the joint work of learning and therapeutic staff provides a safe and generally calm environment. The teacher-in-charge provides strong, clear and purposeful leadership and has been instrumental in providing staff and pupils with an appropriate direction. She has been a stabilising influence through a difficult period of transition. Although, a senior leadership team is in place, too many responsibilities remain with the teacher-in-charge.

The PRU will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the PRU's progress.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve outcomes, especially for more able pupils at key stage 4
- R2 Ensure that qualifications offered are at an appropriate level for the ability of the pupils
- R3 Ensure that pupils from Welsh medium schools can continue their learning through the medium of Welsh
- R4 Improve the distribution of leadership responsibilities

Main findings

1: Standards

Adequate, needs improvement

Pupils who attend the PRU have a range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, including complex mental health needs. Most pupils have a history of poor attendance and a minority have difficulty managing their behaviour in their mainstream schools. Many pupils have missed out on a considerable amount of education prior to starting at the PRU. Pupils respond positively to the supportive, positive and nurturing environment provided by the PRU. Over time, nearly all pupils make valuable progress in their learning, confidence and wellbeing in relation to their needs and abilities. Most pupils make worthwhile progress towards achieving their learning and behaviour targets set in their individual daily trackers.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve at the PRU with national averages or to analyse the performance trends of groups over time because of the nature of the pupils' learning and complex health needs.

In 2015-2016, there were 34 Year 11 pupils on roll at the PRU. Nearly all pupils achieved at least one recognised qualification. The majority of pupils achieved a suitable range of GCSE qualifications or equivalent and a minority achieved level 2 qualifications in vocational courses. However, performance in mathematics, English and science at key stage 4 is inconsistent. As a result, older, more able pupils do not consistently reach their full potential.

Around half of the pupils on roll at the PRU for 2015-2016 accessed alternative education provision organised by the local authority. Outcomes for these pupils are generally poor.

There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls, pupils who receive free school meals and those who are in the care of their local authority.

Most pupils move on to suitable further education or training placements and a very few continue their education in sixth-form provision in local schools. Many younger pupils attending the PRU reintegrate successfully back into mainstream education. A few move on to appropriate specialist placements in the local authority.

Nearly all pupils listen well to staff and to each other and learn to take turns and wait patiently. Over time, most pupils develop their confidence and communication skills and interact with peers and staff appropriately. Most pupils talk about their work and their achievements with pride.

Many pupils throughout the PRU make strong progress in their literacy skills in relation to their needs and abilities. Most pupils in key stage 4 produce written work of a high quality. Many write with accuracy in spelling and grammar and structure their work well. A few more able pupils produce extended pieces of writing for a variety of purposes such as report writing and recounting events. Most older pupils redraft their work successfully. Younger pupils take care in presenting their work

such as formal letters and descriptive stories about giants. However, across the PRU, a very few pupils do not respond well enough to suggested improvements to their work.

Many pupils throughout the PRU make suitable progress in their numeracy skills. Many older pupils apply their numeracy skills effectively in subjects across the curriculum to solve problems. In food technology lessons, they estimate the appropriate oven temperature for a new dish successfully and in PE calculate the amount of exercise needed to burn off calories in different foods. Most younger pupils make sound progress in developing their mathematical skills. For example, they present data about the population of counties in Wales successfully using bar graphs.

Pupils throughout the PRU are beginning to develop their ICT skills appropriately. Many pupils use ICT to record and re-draft their work with confidence. A few older pupils use coding programmes effectively to design their own games.

Very few pupils make suitable progress in their Welsh language skills. A very few use basic Welsh phrases to greet staff at the beginning of the day. However, progress in Welsh first language, for a very few pupils where it is appropriate, is insufficient.

2: Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
---	-------------

Many pupils attending the PRU feel safe and consider that staff deal promptly with any incidents of bullying. Pupils enjoy coming to the PRU and nearly all know whom to talk to if they have a problem. Nearly all pupils are polite and courteous and learn to show respect to each other, staff and visitors. Many pupils have a thorough understanding of the importance of healthy living and eating. They participate well in PE lessons and choose to take part in healthy lunchtime activities such as dance, football and basketball.

Overall attendance at the PRU is improving steadily. Many older pupils have shown significant improvement in their attendance since starting at the PRU. Where they do not, this is mainly due to their complex health needs. Generally, pupils are punctual in the morning and to lessons throughout the day.

Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and most have very positive attitudes to learning. Over time, many pupils learn to understand their own and other pupils' emotions, manage their behaviour well and develop their social skills successfully. Many pupils make strong progress towards achieving their targets set in their weekly tracker, 'STARS'. Nearly all pupils build positive working relationships with teachers and support staff. As a result, when behaviour issues arise, pupils generally respond well to the support and encouragement offered by staff and return to their learning in a timely manner.

Overall, the number of fixed term exclusions from the PRU has reduced over time. However, for a very few pupils the number of days lost due to fixed term exclusions remains too high.

Over time, many pupils enjoy their lessons. They participate well in their learning and therapy and a minority stay on task with very little prompting. Over time, they begin to reflect on their own progress maturely and understand what they need to do to achieve their set targets. Many pupils work together well in small groups and support each other sensitively in lessons. A majority of pupils show increasing independence and resilience when facing new challenges. Many, especially older, pupils attend new environments successfully, such as college courses and fresh start schools.

3: Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate, needs improvement
---	------------------------------------

Overall, the quality of teaching is good.

Nearly all teachers plan lessons effectively with a clear structure and suitable learning objectives. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and form positive professional relationships with their pupils.

Most teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies to motivate and engage pupils in their lessons. They set an appropriate pace to the learning and have high expectations of all pupils. They use a variety of activities and tailor these to meet the needs of individual pupils effectively. This provides all pupils with a suitable level of challenge that is matched well to their ability.

Many teachers make effective use of questions to assess and extend pupils' learning, knowledge and understanding of concepts. A few teachers use extended and probing questions well to encourage pupils to express their opinions and to develop their thinking skills. Many teachers provide pupils with timely, positive feedback. They suggest areas for improvement in a sensitive way to make sure pupils do not lose confidence.

In a very few lessons teachers do not plan securely enough for the next steps of learning.

The PRU groups pupils well to place them in classes where they can flourish and achieve. A broad curriculum offers pupils an appropriate range of subjects including science, art and food technology. The PRU plans well for pupils to attend a suitable balance of academic and therapeutic sessions. However, on a few occasions withdrawal from lessons to attend intervention sessions disrupts the progress of pupils in their learning.

The PRU offers pupils a wide range of learning experiences including drama projects and outdoor activities such as walk the mile and a beach survey. Older pupils have useful weekly opportunities to attend a course at a local college. This allows them to gain experience of learning with another provider and prepares them effectively for a future beyond the PRU.

The PRU offers a range of qualifications and units of credit. However, the PRU does not offer an appropriate range of qualifications at a high enough level for the ability of the pupils.

The PRU has formed a useful internal learning community that allows teachers from different key stages to consider and develop approaches to teaching literacy, numeracy and digital competency. Teachers have completed a thorough audit of pupils' skills within different subjects and across all stages of learning.

The PRU promotes basic Welsh language skills and an understanding of the culture of Wales well across the provision. However, there are currently no opportunities for pupils from Welsh-medium schools to continue their learning through the medium of Welsh or for these pupils to take Welsh language qualifications.

4: Care, support and guidance	Good
--------------------------------------	-------------

The caring, supportive ethos created by the joint work of learning and therapeutic staff provides a safe and generally calm environment. Highly skilled staff work effectively to help pupils develop the skills and confidence over time to engage well in learning and therapy.

Staff provide appropriate support to pupils. Where appropriate this includes the use of therapeutic interventions. These help pupils get the best from their time at the PRU. As a result, pupils develop their emotional resilience and learn tolerance of others, and to manage their anxiety and improve their self-esteem.

The PRU has recently developed a comprehensive provision map. This tracking system allows the PRU to record and monitor pupils' progress in learning and therapy. It is used well to identify needs and plan interventions and support for individual pupils. Senior leaders are beginning to use this data well to plan improvements in teaching and learning.

All pupils have individual plans with targets agreed by pupils, parents and staff. Progress in meeting targets is carefully monitored. Pupils make good progress in meeting their targets.

Comprehensive assessments on entry to the PRU allow staff to identify and plan well for the individual needs of many pupils. When pupils return to mainstream education, their school receives very helpful updated assessment information to support a smooth transfer.

The PRU has a number of dedicated areas used for therapeutic interventions with both pupils and families. Pupils benefit from the consistent approach of this close work. For example, staff at the PRU support parents in developing consistent approaches to managing behaviour. Staff keep in close contact with parents and provide them with very useful reports. The PRU's work with parents is a particular strength.

The PRU has an active school council and this has supported pupils in developing a better understanding of the importance of taking responsibility and decision-making. Their views are taken seriously by senior leaders and have an impact on provision.

A range of interesting activities provide pupils with opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding about keeping safe and making choices that impact positively on their mental and physical health. These activities include time to use their imagination and explore creative arts, learn about and prepare healthy foods and write and perform in an innovative drama initiative. Good work with other agencies supports this. The PRU also helps pupils get involved in and make a difference in their community. For example, as part of the national beach survey initiative, pupils have adopted Pink Bay in Porthcawl.

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

5: Leadership and management	Adequate, needs improvement
-------------------------------------	------------------------------------

The PRU was established in 2014. Since then there have been two restructures and considerable staff turnover.

The current teacher-in-charge took up post in January 2016 and has been a stabilising influence through a difficult period of transition. She has been very effective in building a senior leadership team and bringing different aspects of provision together. The teacher-in-charge provides strong, clear and purposeful leadership and has been instrumental in providing staff and pupils with an appropriate direction.

The PRU's vision and motto is 'step-by-step, always forward'. Staff and pupils contributed to this vision and the motto is reflected very well in all aspects of the PRU's work.

The PRU benefits from the skills and expertise of members of the management committee. The management committee are strong supporters of the work of the PRU. The teacher-in-charge provides detailed reports to the management committee, which focus appropriately on standards and provision. The management committee is developing its role to critically review information presented and help the PRU to identify further ways to improve.

Senior leaders at the PRU are beginning to implement whole school responsibilities. For example, the responsibility to ensure that pupils' additional learning needs are identified and provided for has been appropriately delegated to a member of the senior leadership team and this is working well. However, the teacher-in-charge still holds too many responsibilities compared to other members of the senior leadership team. In addition, senior leaders do very little direct teaching, which means that their valuable expertise is underused. This hinders the ability of the PRU to improve at an appropriate pace.

Overall, the PRU has a good and honest understanding of its strengths and areas for development. The senior leadership team has recently introduced a number of systems and procedures to capture first-hand evidence to support the self-evaluation process. However, the self-evaluation report does not always evaluate standards and provision precisely enough and this is inhibited by the lack of robust data and

analysis. Leaders have not identified important areas for improvement including the progress that pupils make in Welsh and the provision for Welsh.

Generally, there are clear links between the PRU's analysis of its strengths and areas for development and the objectives in the improvement plan. The PRU identifies suitable strategies to achieve its improvement objectives. The PRU assigns staff to objectives, with appropriate timescales for completion and costings

The PRU has benefited from leadership, teaching and curriculum support provided by the regional consortia, chair and vice chair of the management committee, and from other leaders in the PRUs school improvement group.

Overall, the PRU has a good understanding of the costs of specific interventions. It uses the pupil deprivation grant, for example, to provide an after-school club in mathematics and English.

The PRU has a good range of teaching facilities and benefits from being part of the Bryncethin Campus through the use of shared outdoor spaces and the sports hall . The PRU employs a wide range of subject specialists and therapeutic practitioners well to enhance the opportunities and support for pupils.

About the provider

The Bridge Alternative Provision Portfolio PRU was registered in 2014 and is the result of an amalgamation of four separate provisions. The PRU moved to its current location in 2015.

The PRU educates pupils from the age of 7-18 with a wide range of social, emotional and behavioural needs. Most pupils enter the PRU at a time of significant personal crisis. The provision includes part-time, short-term provision for pupils at key stages 2 and 3 with behavioural needs where the focus is on reintegrating pupils to mainstream school. In addition, pupils with mental health or medical needs attend on either a part-time or full-time basis and, where appropriate, are also reintegrated to mainstream school.

The PRU also provides education for children and young people with acute mental health needs at Tŷ Llidiard, based at the Princess of Wales hospital. This is one of two hospital-based provisions in Wales.

In 2016-2017, there are no pupils at key stage 4 with behavioural difficulties placed by the local authority at the PRU.

Currently there are 59 pupils on roll. Many pupils come from the Bridgend area. Pupils that attend Tŷ Llidiard come from authorities across South Wales. Thirty-six per cent of pupils are eligible to free schools meals. A very few pupils are looked-after by the local authority.

The teacher-in-charge took up post in January 2016.

Appendix 1: Summary table of inspection areas

Standards	Adequate, needs improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate, needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Adequate, needs improvement

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate, needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory, needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

Copies of the report

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

We used this inspection to pilot developments to the common inspection framework, the inspection process and the inspection report format. We will review these arrangements and make any changes required before introducing them nationally in September 2017.

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2017: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 26/05/2017