



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

A report on
Alternative Learning Company
Date of inspection: March 2019

by

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

About Alternative Learning Company

The Alternative Learning Company is an independent school in the Stebonheath area of Llanelli. The school, working in partnership with local companies, aims to prepare pupils for employment by developing relevant work-related skills through a curriculum that focuses on work-related education and accredited qualifications.

The school provides full-time education for up to 45 pupils aged 14 to 16 who are dual registered with their secondary school. Currently, there are 33 pupils registered. Nine secondary schools in the Carmarthenshire local authority have service level agreements with the school.

Representatives from local schools, the local authority and Careers Wales are part of a project development group advising on the development of the curriculum.

A curriculum manager, who reports to a board of trustees, provides day-to-day leadership for the school, supported by a project co-ordinator and a small team of tutors and support officers.

Main findings

Strengths

The school has a flexible approach to curriculum planning that takes suitable account of the needs and interests of pupils. Overall, this approach promotes successfully the development of positive attitudes to learning. As a result, many pupils improve their attendance and behaviour during their time at the school.

Staff at the school establish clear ground rules and routines, and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This structure contributes well to pupils' personal and social development. In sessions, pupils generally listen respectfully to staff and peers, build well on the ideas of others and give thoughtful responses to teachers' questions.

The school works effectively with a range of partners to improve pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe.

Recommended areas for action

The school does not comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Admission processes do not provide staff with sufficient information to plan effectively to support pupils' progress in learning. This includes information about pupils' prior attainment in literacy and numeracy, as well as the work pupils have completed to date to support the achievement of their agreed accredited learning goals. In particular, admission processes do not provide the school with sufficient information to meet the needs identified on pupils' statements of special educational need. As a result, the school is unable to plan well enough to help pupils make the progress they are capable of, including where relevant the achievement of valuable GCSE qualifications.

The school's systems to monitor and track pupils' progress against all aspects of their learning, including their wellbeing, are not robust enough.

Teaching staff build productive working relationships with pupils and provide encouraging feedback and support. However, teachers' planning does not enable pupils to build on prior learning or to consolidate and extend their skills progressively.

Given the areas of non-compliance with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the Welsh Government may wish to recommend that the school should not increase the number of pupils above the 33 currently on roll.

Compliance with the standards for registration

Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school

The school does not fully meet the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school should ensure:

- it has a curriculum policy set out in writing and supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and implement it effectively [1(2)]
- the curriculum gives pupils of compulsory school age experience in the following areas of learning: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative [1(2)(a)(ii)]
- the subject matter is appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with a statement [1(2)(b)]
- that where pupils have a statement, the education provided fulfil its requirements [1(2)(e)]
- the curriculum provides the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress [1(2)(j)]
- the 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(3)(a)]
- teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons [1(3)(e)]
- there is a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and that information from such assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress [1(3)(g)]
- there is in place a framework by which pupil performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents and/or, by national norms [1(4)]
- teachers provide education which enables all pupils within a class to make progress including pupils with statements and those for whom Welsh or English is an additional language [1(5)]

Standard 2: The spiritual, moral, and cultural development of pupils

The school does not fully meet the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school should:

- assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions 2(e)

Standard 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard. ***Standard 4: The suitability of proprietors and staff***

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Standard 5: Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 5.

Standard 6: The provision of information

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Standard 7: The manner in which complaints are to be handled

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 7.

Recommendation regarding continued registration

When considering this school's registration the Welsh Government may wish to have regard to the following recommendation:

The school does not currently meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. To comply fully with these requirements, the school should address the issues identified above for each standard.

Inspectors' judgements on this limited inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (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 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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