



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

A report on

Mynydd Haf

Date of inspection: November 2019

by

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

About Mynydd Haf

Mynydd Haf is an independent special school situated in Trethomas near Caerphilly. The school opened in March 2016 and is part of the Keys group. The school provides full-time education for pupils with social emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Currently, the school has 19 pupils on roll aged between 11 and 16 years, nine of whom are in key stage 3 and ten in key stage 4. Four pupils are resident in Keys children's homes. Nearly all pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. The majority of pupils are looked after by local authorities in England and Wales.

The headteacher has been in post since October 2017.

Main findings

Strengths

School leaders have responded positively to the recommendations from the previous monitoring visit. They are developing a secure sense of the school's strengths and its areas for improvement. The school has useful arrangements to quality assure its work, for example, through regular team meetings, lesson observations and the support and challenge provided by the school's regional manager.

The school has suitable systems in place to track and monitor pupils' progress in learning, attendance and behaviour. It has recently introduced a helpful framework to track and monitor the progress pupils make in the important attitudes that support their learning, for example, their ability to listen, concentrate and deal with disappointment.

Teachers and support staff build caring and supportive working relationships with pupils. They provide encouraging and consistent feedback to pupils, which helps to build pupils' confidence.

Areas for development

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

Since the last visit, the school has continued to make improvements to the school environment. Classrooms are well-resourced and the building is generally well maintained. However, the size and acoustics of the building, and the proximity of classrooms to each other, are not conducive to creating a calm learning environment. Indeed, these factors contribute significantly to magnifying the disruptive impact of the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils who are not engaged in learning on the learning and progress of others.

Despite improvements to lesson planning since the last visit, the curriculum provided by the school is not flexible enough to meet the needs of pupils who do not engage in learning. Since September 2019, as a result of undesirable behaviours, the majority of pupils have at some time been in receipt of an internal exclusion or have been educated off-site. In such cases, the school makes use of facilities in the community to supervise pupils. However, the school's rationale for its use of these facilities is underdeveloped. As a result, this approach often provides only a temporary response to pupils' challenging behaviour and does not ensure that they benefit from opportunities in the community to consolidate or extend their learning.

There is too much variability in the quality of teaching and assessment, including the contribution that learning support workers make to learning.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Ensure that the school complies fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003**
- R2 Improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning**
- R3 Ensure that curriculum planning, including the use of off-site provision, is appropriate and relevant to pupils' needs and learning goals**
- R4 Improve the quality of teaching and learning support across the school**

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous note of visit or inspection report

Recommendation 1: Ensure that the school complies fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003

The school has addressed successfully most of the areas of non-compliance identified on the previous visit. However, the school remains non-compliant with one of the regulations under Standard 2 identified during the previous visit. In addition, inspectors noted a further area of non-compliance during this monitoring visit.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that teachers' planning provides pupils with appropriate opportunities to develop and apply their skills.

Since the last inspection, the school has implemented a secure framework to support teachers' planning. For example, it has introduced pupil workbooks for each subject that are adapted appropriately according to ability. This ensures that the majority of pupils have worthwhile opportunities to practise, consolidate and develop their skills across the curriculum. Teachers work together to share planning according to their areas of expertise and to review what has worked well.

In many lessons, teachers plan suitably to ensure activities are tailored to pupils' interests and abilities. Learning objectives are clear and shared suitably with pupils. However, a minority of pupils do not respond well in lessons or sustain their engagement consistently enough over time. This means that they do not develop their skills in line with their abilities.

Recommendation 3: Improve the support for pupils' identified therapeutic needs

Since the last inspection the school has taken appropriate action to address this recommendation. The school has employed a suitably qualified specialist to ensure pupils have helpful access to individual support to help them address their emotional and social difficulties. As a result, pupils are beginning to develop a better understanding of their emotions and actions and the impact that this has on both themselves and others. However, the ongoing disruptive behaviour of a significant minority of pupils has a detrimental impact on the learning of other pupils.

In order to meet the identified speech and language needs of a few pupils, the school has very recently liaised with placing authorities for advice, support and guidance. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this work.

Recommendation 4: Improve the provision for pupils' personal, social and health education needs

The school has reflected on the impact of its approach to the delivery of personal, social and health education. Pupils now benefit from working in small groups or on a one-to-one basis to follow a curriculum that is based on their individual needs and abilities. This planning focuses suitably on developing pupils' understanding and skills. For example, the school has identified that around a quarter of pupils smoke regularly and has implemented a programme to help pupils stop smoking. However, currently only a very few pupils engage with this support.

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 that where pupils have a statement, the education provided fulfils its requirements 1(2)(e)**
- **Ensure the curriculum provides the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress1(2)(i)**

Standard 2: The spiritual, moral, and cultural development 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 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 3.

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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 6.

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

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

Recommendation regarding 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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