



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

A report on

The Haven

Date of inspection: July 2022

by

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

About The Haven

The Haven is an independent day school registered to provide education for up to eight pupils aged 11-19 years who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum condition (ASC). It is owned and managed by the charity Autism Initiatives.

The school is situated on the outskirts of Mold in North Wales. There are currently seven pupils on roll. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher has been in post since January 2019. She is supported by a teacher and a team of five teaching assistants. At the time of this inspection, the school had lacked a permanent teacher since February 2022. Since that time, teaching has been provided by a series of supply teachers.

The school was last inspected in September 2019.

Main findings

Strengths

The school is located in spacious grounds in a peaceful rural setting. This provides a calm learning environment for pupils and supports their sensory needs well.

In lessons, pupils engage well in their learning. They respond positively to the caring and supportive approach of staff and build constructive working relationships with them. These relationships help pupils to manage their anxiety and to improve their confidence and resilience over time.

Staff adopt a calm and reflective approach and work collaboratively to benefit the pupils. They respond well to pupils' curiosity and enthusiasm, encourage their questions during lessons and make sure they create sufficient time to respond to these in order to strengthen and reinforce learning. As a result, pupils feel valued and play an active part in their own learning. This nurturing approach ensures that staff know their pupils well and are well placed to evaluate their progress.

The school has shown resilience and flexibility during the COVID-19 pandemic by continuing to remain open to provide education for its pupils throughout this period. Despite these challenges, the headteacher has provided stable and effective leadership that has enabled the school to make steady progress against recommendations from recent monitoring visits.

Areas for development

Over several years, the school has struggled to recruit and retain a suitably qualified and experienced teacher to lead teaching at the school. This means that teaching has been provided by a succession of temporary teachers, both in the recent past and for much of this academic year. Inevitably, this instability has had an impact on the quality of planning and the consistency and effectiveness of approaches to assessment. In particular, there is too much variability in the quality of planning across the curriculum. In turn, these shortcomings limit the progress that pupils make across all areas of their learning.

Staff monitor individual pupils' progress and record their achievements on a regular basis. They track pupils' attendance, engagement in learning and behaviour well. However, assessment processes do not focus clearly enough on pupils' progress in learning across the curriculum, and staff do not use the outcomes of this process well enough to plan for next steps in pupils' learning.

The school's external environment provides great potential for the development of outdoor learning and the development of pupils' practical skills. However, the school's planning and facilities to promote learning in these areas are underdeveloped.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Ensure stability in staffing, and recruit and retain a suitably qualified permanent teacher
- R2 Improve the consistency and quality of planning across the curriculum
- R3 Improve the assessment of pupils' learning and use this information more effectively to plan for pupils' next steps in learning
- R4 Make better use of the school's external environment to promote learning

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous visit or inspection report

R1. Finalise the personal social health and education policy and amend the scheme of work in line with the amendments to the policy

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has put in place a policy and extended the scope of its planning for personal, social and health education. The policy sets out the school's aims and rationale for this curriculum area, and details the broad topics to be covered over time. Generally, the topics included are appropriate and address many relevant areas of health and wellbeing, relationships and living in the wider world. Teaching staff draw from this overview to plan teaching according to the needs and interests of individual pupils.

The school supplements this core provision with beneficial input from the school's community police officer. He attends the school termly to discuss issues such as county lines, online safety, consent, drug awareness and substance misuse. In a few areas, planning for topics such as preventing radicalisation, exploitation and sexual harassment is less well developed. Overall, arrangements to monitor how well pupils cover and re-visit topics over time are at an early stage of development.

Generally, the school plans well to support pupils' emotional and social development in relation to their specific needs. The school's highly person-centred approach includes worthwhile timetabled opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of social situations and social communication, for example when listening to others, turn taking, and adapting language to suit content and audience. These sessions help pupils to understand and manage their emotions, and engage constructively with their learning.

R2. Monitor the impact of new initiatives.

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has developed suitable arrangements to monitor new initiatives implemented to address recommendations from previous Estyn inspections. For example, the headteacher has introduced appropriate arrangements to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Although still very much at a formative stage due to the challenges of securing a permanent teacher, the arrangements are based suitably on a planned programme of work scrutiny, lesson observations and learning walks.

The self-evaluation report provides an honest and accurate account of the work of the school. However, the quality of the evaluation is variable and it does not always provide clear enough judgments on the quality of teaching and pupils' standards of achievement to enable the school to identify key areas where improvement is needed.

There is an appropriate link between the majority of the areas for development identified in the report and the priorities in the development plan. The plan identifies staff's responsibilities and appropriate time considerations for completing them. However, the improvement priorities do not always include clear and measurable success criteria. This shortcoming limits the headteacher's ability to monitor and evaluate progress towards achieving these targets effectively so that staff can plan their next steps more strategically.

Compliance with the standards for registration

Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school

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 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 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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 4.

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 continued registration

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

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

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 (<http://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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).