



Report summary for parents and carers on Dan y Coed

Date of inspection: November 2022

by Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Overview

Dan y Coed is a happy and nurturing school that serves pupils' additional learning needs well. The school provides a welcoming, positive learning environment.

Due to their complex and multiple learning needs the ability range of pupils across the school varies considerably. Most pupils at Dan y Coed make strong progress from their initial starting points across a range of important skills. This is due to the valuable support and encouragement they receive from teaching and onsite therapeutic staff. However, pupils' information and technology skills are not developed progressively.

Teaching staff know the pupils very well and make effective use of this knowledge and understanding to tailor learning opportunities to interest pupils and ensure that they make good progress. These engaging experiences are well matched to pupils' needs and lead to high levels of pupil engagement in learning. The school offers a flexible, broad, and balanced curriculum that is well suited to the needs, interests, and aspirations of the pupils. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to access work related experiences.

A notable strength of the school is the use of its bespoke assessment and achievement continuum, which assesses pupils' progress robustly. This strategy successfully captures each small step of progress relative to an individual pupil's additional learning needs. Nearly all teaching staff use this system confidently to inform next steps in learning, which has a significant impact upon the progress of pupils.

Senior leaders communicate a clear vision for the school that focuses on providing an integrated approach to meeting pupils' needs. The head of education has a clear sense of purpose and provides the school with strong strategic leadership.

Nearly all teaching staff engage well in beneficial professional learning opportunities at the school. However, leaders do not routinely evaluate these opportunities to inform the planning of future learning well enough.



Recommendations

R1 Improve opportunities for pupils to develop information and communication technology skills progressively across the curriculum

R2 Strengthen the opportunities for pupils to develop work related opportunities

R3 Formalise the evaluation of professional learning opportunities for all staff

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 meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

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.

What happens next

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what actions the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents/carers at the school.

Estyn will invite Dan y Coed to prepare a case study on its work in relation to its specialist assessment and achievement continuum, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

School context

Name of provider	Dan y Coed
Proprietor	Orbis Education and Care
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent special
Residential provision?	No
Number of pupils on roll	26
Pupils of statutory school age	26
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	14/11/2022
<p>Dan y Coed school is an independent special school situated in the West Cross area of Swansea. The school opened in November 2017 and is owned by Orbis Education and Care. It is part of the portfolio of August Equity, a private equity investment company.</p> <p>The school is in a large, detached property with easy access to the Mumbles coastline and the city of Swansea. The school shares the site with its residential provision, which provides a twenty-bed, 52-week provision, which opened in May 2019.</p> <p>Currently there are 26 pupils attending the school. Eleven pupils are residential in the on-site care home and fifteen are day pupils. Nearly all pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and English as their first language. Twelve of the pupils have looked after status. Pupils are placed at the school from local authorities in Wales and England.</p> <p>The head of education has been in post since September 2017. The school has five class teachers, six lead learning support assistants and 21 learning support assistants. In addition, care workers from the residential setting support children in lessons and activities as required. A clinical team, including a speech and language therapist and occupational therapist technician, supports the education team.</p> <p>The school's aim is to 'provide a safe and secure school environment that encourages individuality, confidence and self-esteem'.</p> <p>This is the school's first core inspection.</p>	

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