



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

A report on

Gwenllian Education Centre

Date of inspection: March 2024

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Gwenllian Education Centre

Gwenllian Education Centre is an independent day school in Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire. It offers individualised education for up to 22 pupils aged 5 to 19 years who have complex needs that include communication difficulties associated with autistic spectrum condition (ASC). Currently, there are 20 pupils on roll and all pupils have an individual development plan (IDP).

The school operates in premises that provide several small teaching spaces in addition to two large classrooms. The school has several outdoor play areas and provides a welcoming learning environment.

The school aims to provide a personalised educational experience to develop pupil skills and increase their independence. The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has been in post since the school opened in 2012.

Main findings

Strengths

Gwenllian Education Centre provides a calm, nurturing learning environment, where pupils are happy and enjoy learning.

Recent improvements to the outside area enhance pupils learning experiences. Facilities, such as the new climbing frame and slide, support pupils to self-regulate and to develop their physical skills and spatial self-awareness effectively.

Staff at the school know the pupils extremely well and foster strong working relationships with them. They have high expectations of their pupils. Most staff make highly effective use of this knowledge to provide learning experiences that are matched very well to pupils' individual needs. They track the small steps in learning highly effectively and use this information to ensure that learning intentions build progressively. In the most effective lessons, learning activities are purposeful and the pace of teaching is brisk. As a result, most pupils make strong progress in their learning from their individual starting points.

Nearly all pupils transition quickly from task to reward, and then on to new tasks. Most pupils self-regulate during these transitions successfully or use their communication strategies effectively to ask for more time or to select a different activity.

Pupils' sense of personal responsibility and independence is well developed, relative to their age and ability. For example, pupils with complex needs understand that they should put rubbish in bins and a very few older pupils work alongside the school's catering staff to prepare lunch for the school community.

Pupils know that they have opportunities to influence the work of the school through the school council. For example, older pupils recently asked to be able to remove their 'high vis' jackets when walking in the local area. The headteacher worked with these pupils to understand the importance of road safety and agreed that the jackets could be removed by an individual once they have passed a road safety test.

Leaders are visible around the school, engage actively in the school's work and have a strong understanding of the needs and interests of pupils. They know their school well and have a clear grasp of the strengths and areas that may require improvement. Leaders respond swiftly and effectively to the needs of both pupils and staff, for example engaging external tutors to support pupils studying GCSEs and changes to work patterns to ensure the well-being of staff.

Areas for development

Approaches to the planning and delivery of the curriculum for more able pupils lack coherence. As a result, activities do not always offer an appropriate level of challenge or build progressively upon mastered skills.

Incorporating careers education and work experience into the curriculum is in the early stages of development.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Ensure that learning activities challenge and progressively develop the skills of more able pupils
- R2 Embed careers education and work-related opportunities across the school

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous visit or inspection report

R1. Further develop opportunities for pupils to access work related experiences.

The school has made suitable progress towards embedding work experience opportunities into the curriculum for those older pupils for whom it is appropriate. Broader careers education is less well embedded in the curriculum across the school.

Since the last monitoring visit, contact has been made with a range of local businesses to establish links with the school and identify possible work experience opportunities. A very few pupils have been able to take advantage of these and have benefited from working with others and developing their employability skills. These links have proved difficult to maintain.

The school has responded to the difficulties of accessing external work experience opportunities by providing valuable internal experiences. For example, one pupil works in the school kitchen, and another works in the school office.

The school has recently appointed a teacher with responsibility for overseeing the provision and evaluation of work experience and careers education across the school. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this new position.

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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 2.

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 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:

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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