



Report summary for parents and carers on Eastward House School

Date of inspection: January 2024

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

Overview

Eastward House provides an inclusive, nurturing environment that successfully promotes the development of pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Teachers and support staff have developed strong relationships with pupils and know their pupils well. As a result, pupils are happy to attend and develop a sense of pride and belonging during their time at the school. They feel safe and secure and know who to go to if they are worried or concerned.

Over time many pupils settle appropriately to their learning at the school following periods of disruption to their schooling. They make suitable progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills from their initial starting points within teaching activities. However overall pupils' progress in their literacy and numeracy is underdeveloped.

Curriculum planning at the school is weak and underdeveloped. As a result, levels of challenge provided by activities and lessons across the school are variable and pupils' skills across the curriculum are not developed progressively. In addition, the school has no structured plans to develop and assess pupils' skills progressively.

The school has recently experienced a period of significant disruption to the management and strategic leadership of the school. This includes a period when a senior member of staff moved to a sister school, due to staff absence, to provide leadership. This hiatus has limited the leaders' ability to establish effective mechanisms to support the operation, management and performance of the school.

Leaders do not gather and analyse first hand evidence to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of teaching. Due to the limited amount of quality assurance work undertaken, leaders do not have a robust understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the provision, which limits their ability to plan strategically for improvement.

The school has procedures in place to make appropriate and timely referrals to other agencies when it has a safeguarding concern. However, leaders' record keeping of these referrals and other safeguarding matters is not sufficiently robust.

The school is not fully compliant with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen the management of safeguarding and address the shortcomings identified during the inspection**
- R2 Comply with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003**
- R3 Formalise governance and leadership arrangements to strengthen strategic oversight so that leaders understand and fulfil their roles effectively**
- R4 Establish rigorous procedures for quality assurance and improvement planning, focusing clearly on pupil progress and outcomes, to support leaders' management and improvement of the school**
- R5 Strengthen curriculum planning to ensure that all programmes of study are supported by appropriate schemes of work and assessment to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills progressively**

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 does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 the school should:

- have a curriculum policy set out in writing and supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work and implement it effectively
- ensure that the curriculum policy enables pupils to acquire skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy
- when pupils have a statement, fulfil its educational requirements
- ensure that the curriculum provides the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress
- ensure that lessons are well planned, teaching methods effective and suitable activities used. The school should ensure that class time is managed wisely
- ensure that teachers demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught
- ensure that there a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and utilise information from such assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress

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 does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 the school should:

- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school which complies with Welsh Government Guidance 272 / 2021 Keeping Learners Safe

The suitability of proprietors and staff

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 the school should:

- prior to the appointment of any member of staff to work at the school, where the prospective member of staff is an individual in respect of whom the Secretary of State must issue a disclosure and barring certificate under section 113A of the Police Act 1997, the proprietor ensures that:
the individual has applied for an appropriate disclosure and barring certificate; and the individual makes the certificate available to the proprietor
- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, carry out appropriate checks to confirm their identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and where appropriate qualifications and professional references and take into account information in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed

The suitability of the premises and accommodation

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

Since the school does not meet the standards required for registration, the Welsh Government will require the proprietor to submit an action plan within a specified period of time. This plan will set out the steps that the school will take to meet the standards, and the timescale within which it will complete each step.

School context

Name of provider	Eastward House School
Proprietor	Harriet Harrison
Local authority	Cardiff local authority
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent special
Residential provision?	No
Number of pupils on roll	29
Pupils of statutory school age	29
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	22/01/2024
<p>Eastward House is an independent special school located in Cardiff, established in September 2021. The school has a second site in Bridgend, which is used as a base for outdoor education. The proprietor currently owns three independent schools in Wales.</p> <p>The school provides education for pupils between the ages of seven to eighteen years who have specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, as well as learning difficulties associated with autistic spectrum condition (ASC) and attention deficit disorder (ADD). In addition, the school provides education for pupils who have no specific learning need but whose parents wish to enrol their child as an alternative to local state schools.</p> <p>There are currently 29 pupils on roll. Nearly all pupils have statements of special educational needs or an individual development plan. Nearly all pupils are placed by a local authority. Currently, the school is registered to admit 35 pupils.</p>	

© Crown Copyright 2024: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 25/03/2024

Please note that the photographs displayed may not be of the school that is the subject of this report.