



A report on:

Cilddewi Uchaf

Date of inspection: June 2015

by

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

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Crown Copyright 2015: 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: 04/08/2015

Context

Cilddewi Uchaf is one of four small independent special schools operated in Wales by CastleCare Cymru. The school is situated in a rural location in Carmarthenshire, and consists of a classroom within a children's home. The school is registered to educate up to three boys or girls aged from 8 to 16 years who live in the children's home. All pupils are looked after by a local authority and may have a statement of special educational needs. There are currently two pupils on roll at the school.

The company has recently appointed a permanent full-time teacher to work across the schools in Wales. He currently teaches around a quarter of the lessons at Cilddewi Uchaf. Care staff deliver many of the sessions, and support pupils on off-site activities. They also provide support for the teacher and pupils within the classroom.

A lead teacher oversees the education provision across all the CastleCare schools in Wales. She visits the school on a monthly basis. She also carries out a range of roles within the organisation in England.

In 2014, the company appointed an executive headteacher to take responsibility for the strategic management of all the CastleCare schools in England and Wales.

In 2014, CastleCare became part of the Priory Group.

As there are fewer than five pupils at the school, inspectors did not give a judgement for Key Question 1, standards or wellbeing. This is because the number of pupils was too few to report on without identifying individual pupils.

Summary

The school's current performance	Adequate
The school's prospects for improvement	Unsatisfactory

Current performance

The current performance of the school is adequate because:

- Programmes are tailored to match individual pupils' needs
- The school provides pupils with valuable opportunities to develop their independent living skills and prepare them for adult life
- Where teaching is effective, staff are skilful in gaining the interest of pupils and helping them complete tasks
- Staff within the school and the care setting work together well to meet the emotional needs of the pupils

However:

- Not all activities are meaningful learning experiences and, as a result, pupils do not always make enough progress
- Planning to ensure the development of pupils' skills across the curriculum is not co-ordinated effectively enough
- The school does not use data well enough to track progress or to inform planning
- Strategies to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality have had little impact

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are unsatisfactory because:

- There is a lack of coherent strategic direction at the school
- Self-evaluation processes are weak
- The school has developed very few effective partnerships
- The school does not have enough staff with appropriate experience and knowledge
- Staff do not receive enough training on educational issues

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.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the planning and co-ordination of key skills across the curriculum to ensure effective continuity and progression for all pupils
- R2 Improve the use of data to track pupil progress and inform planning
- R3 Develop effective strategies to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality
- R4 Ensure that leaders and managers provide a clear strategic direction for the school
- R5 Strengthen self-evaluation processes so that all staff have a clear understanding of strengths and areas for development at the school
- R6 Ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of their role within education during the school day

What happens next?

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what action 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 at the school.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

No Judgement
made

Standards: No judgement made

Inspectors did not make a judgement for standards.

Wellbeing: No judgement made

Inspectors did not make a judgement for wellbeing.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Adequate

The school provides an appropriate curriculum, that includes classroom based learning and off-site activities such as sport and educational visits. Teaching staff plan individual programmes for the pupils that match their abilities and needs. They respond well to pupils' requests, where appropriate. For example they introduced a course in childcare and bought in the services of a specialist teacher to deliver the subject.

The school provides pupils with valuable opportunities to develop their independent living skills and prepare them for adult life. These include sessions in menu planning, cookery and washing and ironing.

The school provides pupils with the opportunity to achieve accreditation for the work they do. This includes GCSEs and ASDAN awards.

The school organises relevant educational visits that help pupils to develop their knowledge of history, geography and literature. These include visits to museums and coastal paths.

Pupils have limited opportunities to engage with the local community. However, the school organises work experience for pupils at key stage 4. This includes dog walking at an animal sanctuary and working in a café.

In a minority of cases, sessions led by care staff provide pupils with a good opportunity to learn. For example, they learn about environmental issues during a visit to a country park. However, planning for these sessions is not detailed enough to ensure progression.

Within formal sessions, teaching staff promote the development of literacy and numeracy skills well. However, at a strategic level, planning to ensure the development of these skills across the school day is not co-ordinated effectively enough. This means that opportunities for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are often missed.

Teaching: Adequate

Where teaching is effective, staff create a calm atmosphere in which pupils can learn effectively. In these lessons, they are skilful in gaining pupils' interest and helping them to settle down. Lessons are planned carefully to match individual pupils' needs and interests.

Teaching staff provide very clear explanations and ask challenging questions. They allow pupils enough time to respond appropriately. They use praise and encouragement well to develop pupils' confidence and to help them to complete tasks.

In the best cases, care staff use appropriate techniques to engage pupils. For example, they talk to pupils about a book they have chosen to read, and ask probing questions to develop understanding. However, a minority of the care staff do not have high enough expectations for pupils' learning, and do not motivate pupils to take part in planned activities. They do not record or evaluate pupil performance in learning situations well enough.

The school keeps clear and useful records for each pupil. However, although the school carries out an appropriate range of assessments, staff do not use this information systematically to track pupil progress and inform planning.

Staff provide helpful oral feedback to motivate pupils. Marking of pupils' work includes positive comments and encouragement. However, it does not always show pupils what they need to do to improve. Assessment for learning strategies are at a very early stage of development.

The school provides detailed monthly reports and an end of year report on pupils' achievements and wellbeing.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate

Staff at the school and in the care setting work together well to meet the emotional needs of the pupils. During the daily handover, they discuss any issues that have arisen and confirm support arrangements for the day.

The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy living. Pupils are encouraged to prepare and eat healthy foods and to undertake regular exercise. For example, they have the opportunity to attend gym sessions, play tennis and attend the local swimming pool.

Through an appropriate citizenship course, pupils learn to reflect on their own and other people's lives and beliefs.

The school works effectively with an appropriate range of specialist agencies, including counselling and therapy services. With external support, the school provides well for personal and social education, including sex and relationship education.

The school has tried a range of strategies to improve pupil attendance and punctuality. For example, they have adapted the curriculum to meet individual pupils' interests and have established a system of rewards and sanctions. However, strategies have had very little impact on improving attendance and punctuality.

All pupils have individual education plans (IEPs) that are reviewed regularly. Staff and pupils are aware of pupils' IEP targets. However, these are not always specific and measurable enough.

The school meets statutory requirements for assessment, recording and reporting procedures.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Adequate

The school works hard to promote a positive ethos of mutual respect between staff and pupils.

The classroom provides an appropriate learning environment for a very small number of pupils. However, classroom space is limited. The layout of the premises makes it difficult to establish a clear distinction between the school and the home. At times, this makes it hard for pupils to focus well enough on their learning.

The school does not have an appropriate area where pupils can go if they are feeling anxious or need quiet time to reflect. On occasions pupils access their bedrooms when they do not wish to take part in learning. This has a negative impact on their attendance, punctuality and general wellbeing.

The school is generally well equipped with appropriate resources to support effective learning. However, information and communication technology (ICT) is limited.

An attractive outside area provides valuable opportunities to enhance classroom learning. The school buildings and grounds are secure and well maintained.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Unsatisfactory
--	-----------------------

Leadership: Unsatisfactory

Staff at the school and in the care setting have a clear vision that all young people should be supported to do their best and achieve their potential.

However, not all staff have a good enough understanding of how they can provide effective education that engages all pupils. They do not all have high enough expectations about what pupils can achieve.

There is a lack of coherent strategic direction at the school. The lead teacher provides useful support for the school, through regular phone calls and monthly visits. However, there are no formal meetings to discuss strategic issues relating to education. As a result, key staff do not have enough opportunities to contribute to discussions on strategic issues

The company took appropriate steps to improve the strategic management of the school by appointing an executive headteacher. Although she has not yet visited the school, she provides helpful advice for the lead teacher. It is too early to see the impact of this work on pupil outcomes.

The school has an appropriate range of detailed and well-presented policies. However, staff do not always implement these policies effectively.

The school collects a suitable range of individual pupil data. However, managers do not use this data effectively enough to monitor performance or inform planning. In part, this is because the school does not have a system for managing its data.

Improving quality: Unsatisfactory

Self-evaluation processes at the school are not regular or systematic. The school does not seek the views of stakeholders effectively. Managers have not carried out lesson observations. This means that they do not have a good enough understanding of strengths and areas for development in relation to the quality of teaching at the school.

Managers do not evaluate effectively enough the impact of the work of the school on pupil outcomes.

The current self-evaluation report covers all the CastleCare schools in Wales and includes very little information specific to Cilddewi Uchaf. The report is too descriptive and not evaluative enough. It does not identify areas for development. It does not include relevant data on pupil standards or attendance.

The school development plan identifies relevant priorities for development. It includes clear responsibilities, resource implications and realistic timescales. However, the self-evaluation report does not link well enough to the school development plan. Staff at the school do not have enough involvement in reviewing the priorities for development and monitoring progress against actions.

The school has made a few important improvements, in response to recommendations from previous annual monitoring visits. In particular, they have made good progress in ensuring that the school complies with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. However, managers have been slow to address a few important issues, for example pupil attendance and engagement and the use of data to track progress and inform planning.

Partnership working: Unsatisfactory

The school has developed very few successful partnerships that have a positive impact for pupils or staff. However, links with a local charity have enabled pupils to engage in work experience at an animal sanctuary. This has helped them develop independence and confidence and given them the opportunity to meet other young people. However, the school does not have systems in place for assuring the quality of this activity.

The school has also developed a useful partnership with a project that offers training in employability skills. This has benefited a very few pupils at key stage 4.

Links with other schools are underdeveloped. This means that staff at Cilddewi Uchaf do not have the opportunity to observe good practice or share knowledge and expertise. Staff are isolated, and it is hard for them to keep up-to-date with developments in relation to education in Wales.

Support for pupils on transition to college is underdeveloped. The school does not make use of local colleges to increase learning opportunities for the pupils.

The school has not developed links with community groups or local businesses. This means that pupils have limited opportunities to develop their skills outside the school setting.

The school has recently become a member of a professional association. This has given managers the opportunity to liaise with other independent school colleagues. However, it is too early to see the impact of this partnership.

Resource management: Unsatisfactory

The school does not have enough staff with appropriate experience and knowledge to provide an effective education for the pupils. The company has taken appropriate steps to improve the quality of teaching by appointing a permanent qualified teacher to work in the company's schools in Wales. However, currently, the teacher only delivers a minority of the teaching sessions at Cilddewi Uchaf.

A third of the care staff have undertaken relevant educational qualifications, for example an NVQ level 3 in learning support assistant training. However, overall, support staff have not received enough training to enable them to carry out their educational role effectively. Because of the irregular shift patterns of the support staff, it is difficult to ensure continuity and progression in teaching and learning.

Performance management has identified appropriate targets for the teacher, and has resulted in a few relevant training events. However, training on educational matters is generally limited.

The company has effective systems in place for sharing resources between schools. This means that the school has access to books and equipment that meet the pupils' needs.

In view of the shortcomings in relation to outcomes, provision and leadership and management, the school does not offer value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Caroline Rees	Reporting Inspector
Elizabeth Ann Dackevych	Team Inspector
Joseph Osbaldeston	Peer Inspector
Paul Scudamore	Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003:
Susan Evans	Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups, the Foundation Phase and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms

Core subject indicator (CSI)	This relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum.
Level 1	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade D to G.
Level 1 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade D to G.
Level 2	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade A* to C.
Level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C including English or Welsh first language and mathematics
Level 2 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C.
Level 3	This represents the equivalent of an A level at grade A*-E.
Level 3 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to two A levels at grade A* to E.
Average wider points score	This includes all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the relevant age, for example at aged 16 or at aged 18.
Capped wider points score	This includes the best eight results from all qualifications approved for use in Wales at aged 16.
Proprietor	The term 'proprietor', as defined in the Education Act 1996, means the person or people responsible for managing an independent school and can include a sole proprietor, governing bodies, trustees or directors. The ways that independent schools are governed and owned varies a great deal. A proprietor or trust may own a school or the school may have a governing body that appoints a headteacher. Some schools have a combination of these.