



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

A report on

Glanynant Learning Centre (PRU)

**Hanbury Street
Glanynant
NP12 3XP**

Date of inspection: December 2022

by

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

About Glanynant Learning Centre (PRU)

Name of provider	Glanynant Learning Centre (PRU)
Local authority	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
Residential provision?	No
Multi-site provision?	No
Number of pupils on roll	18
Pupils of statutory school age	18
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	13/05/2014
Start date of inspection	05/12/2022
<p>Glanynant pupil referral unit (PRU), also known as Glanynant Learning Centre, has been registered as the Caerphilly local authority PRU since 2007. It currently supports pupils aged 5 to 13 years old. The local authority's Education other than at school (EOTAS) strategy clearly sets out that the PRU is part of a developing portfolio approach to provision for vulnerable learners in the authority. This strategy envisages that Glanynant PRU will become more closely integrated with a range of pathways and settings to meet the broad range of learners' needs which cannot be met at a mainstream school. Since September 2021, the PRU management committee has taken on responsibility for overseeing this overarching set of provision is known as Cwmpawd.</p>	

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Pupils placed at Glanynant PRU have a range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many pupils have missed a considerable amount of education, have significant gaps in their learning and have developed poor attitudes to their learning.

Staff support pupils well to encourage them to re-engage with their education and learning and, as a result, most pupils are beginning to make appropriate progress from their starting points. Nearly all pupils develop valuable working relationships with staff during their time at the PRU, and this helps them to feel safe and secure.

Around half the pupils are on part-time bespoke timetables and this limits the progress they make in their learning. When pupils are able to attend, many improve their levels of attendance compared to that in their previous schools. The PRU aims to reintegrate pupils into mainstream education, but only few pupils are successfully supported to do so.

The PRU provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the wide and diverse needs of the learners well. The worthwhile range of learning experiences build well on pupils' interests and includes valuable opportunities for outdoor activities, which support well the development of pupils' self-esteem and resilience.

However, the planning for the progressive development of literacy, numeracy, digital competence and Welsh is underdeveloped. As a result, pupils do not develop these skills well enough or have enough opportunities to use them confidently across different curriculum subjects and areas of learning experiences.

Teachers have a clear understanding of the range of abilities of their pupils and provide suitably varied learning activities. Support staff are used effectively and make a beneficial contribution to pupils' learning. Although teachers provide pupils with positive feedback on what they have done well, few give pupils effective guidance on how they can improve their work. As a result, feedback does not help pupils to improve the standard of their work.

Leaders do not use the results of self-evaluation activities well enough to identify shortcomings in pupils' progress and attendance and make continuous improvements. Leadership roles at all levels are not clear enough and the management committee does not provide the PRU with an appropriate level of scrutiny and challenge.

The current building is not big enough to be able to use the space flexibly to meet the needs of the pupils and staff, although plans are in place to add additional classrooms.

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen improvement planning by ensuring self-evaluation activities focus on pupil progress and the standards they achieve
- R2 Ensure that all members of the management committee and the local authority have a good understanding of the PRU's strengths and areas for development
- R3 Improve attendance and pupils' engagement in full-time education
- R4 Improve pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital competence skills
- R5 Ensure that teachers' feedback enables pupils to know what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this PRU is in need of significant improvement. The PRU will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the PRU's progress about 12 months after the publication of this report.

Main findings

Learning

On entry to Glanynant PRU, there is considerable variation in pupils' individual starting points, motivation and learning ability. During their time at the PRU, a few pupils make suitable progress from their individual starting points in line with their needs and ability.

Whilst overall, pupils' literacy development is too slow, most pupils placed at the PRU make valuable progress in developing their oracy skills. They speak confidently and enthusiastically to adults about issues and activities that interest them. For example, younger pupils talk happily about their work on deforestation and the differences between the wildlife and climate of Madagascar and Wales. Older pupils deliver formal presentations on the key characteristics of countries that are represented in the FIFA football world cup, and a very few are confident and articulate when communicating their thoughts and ideas. Most pupils listen attentively to adults and generally respond suitably to the questions and instructions given.

During their time at the PRU, a few pupils make sound progress in their reading skills. A few younger pupils use a range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words and infer meaning from complex text. Older pupils use the internet successfully to gather facts and information on specific topics, often showing an appropriate understanding of the key ideas and information within texts. Pupils do not choose to read independently for enjoyment.

Most pupils' writing skills do not develop well enough across the PRU. A few older pupils are beginning to structure their writing suitably, using complex and compound sentences and paragraphs. For example, these pupils write about the chronological events that led to the Great Fire of London and create thought-provoking posters for Anti Bullying Week. Pupils do not develop their writing skills systematically across a broad enough range of curriculum areas or develop their understanding of layout, level of formality and language. Pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work are inconsistent across the PRU.

Overall, nearly all pupils across the PRU make limited progress in developing their Welsh language skills.

Most pupils throughout the PRU gain an appropriate understanding of number and younger pupils are confident in adding, subtracting and multiplying numbers up to 100. Many older pupils use protractors accurately to calculate angles and recall angles on a straight line and in a circle. However, overall, the numeracy skills of most pupils do not develop well enough from their starting points during their time at the PRU.

Younger pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) suitably to create leaflets to promote a charitable event organised by a cancer charity. Older pupils create informative presentations using the facts they have collected on different countries and use appropriate software to design a holiday postcard from Brazil. However, across all ages there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop

their ICT skills progressively over time and in different areas of the curriculum and as a result, pupils do not develop their ICT skills well enough.

Many pupils develop strong thinking and problem-solving skills during their time at the PRU. Older pupils work hard at tasks which require thought and explain their thinking methodically. Many are beginning to discuss more complex issues with increased understanding. Pupils carefully challenge each other to consider what aspects and elements of an experiment they can change and alter to strengthen their hypothesis and predictions and ensure it is a fair test. For example, they consider ways of protecting an egg from breaking when dropped from a specific height, and discuss what different materials to test.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their creative and artistic skills. Younger pupils talk knowledgeably about Andy Warhol and emulate his style and design. Older pupils learn about Pointillism to create similar patterns using a colour wheel. They study the cultural history of masks associated with samba music from Brazil and recreate different effects and textures including blocking in colour, using washes and thickened paint to create textural effects.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils feel safe, secure and well cared for in the PRU. They have confidence in the staff team to deal well with poor behaviour and incidents of bullying. Pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe, particularly in a digital world.

The sensitive support of staff assists pupils in understanding both their own emotions and the emotional responses of others. Based on their understanding, many older pupils are increasingly aware of their own triggers and develop the skills, with increasing independence to manage their own behaviours. For example, pupils choose to go to a quiet space or request activities that they have identified support them in managing their emotions.

In lessons, many older pupils display positive attitudes towards their learning and engage well with teachers and support staff. A few younger pupils with more complex emotional needs do not consistently focus on their work, co-operate well with staff or show respect for others. Most pupils demonstrate appropriate behaviour in class, around the school buildings, and on the yard, including at lunchtimes in the hall.

Only a very few of the pupils are aware of their personal targets, and many pupils find it difficult to discuss the good features of their work and what they could do to improve it. A majority of younger pupils with complex needs are reliant on staff support to direct their learning and make slow progress towards working independently.

Pupils enjoy the opportunity to take part in pupil voice activities such as the school council. They value the opportunities to contribute to the life of the PRU and have recently enjoyed completing a survey on adopting a school uniform with their peers.

Most pupils take part enthusiastically in activities to develop their creativity. For example, they write, record and edit songs as part of music sessions.

Nearly all pupils value the opportunities to take part in regular physical activities such as rock climbing, gorge walking, cycling and dodgeball. Through these activities, pupils strengthen their resilience and self-esteem and become more willing to respond positively to challenge and take informed risks in lessons.

Many pupils interact suitably with each other outside of lessons. For example, many pupils regularly enjoy playing football at break times, celebrating the success of peers. Younger pupils enjoy using scooters in the school yard and are tolerant of others using the same space.

Many pupils develop suitably their understanding of the importance of helping other people through their participation in a range of engaging activities. For example, they bake cakes to raise money for a cancer charity and take part in an extended fund-raising activity to provide a defibrillator for the local community. A project by pupils to raise money to buy gifts for NHS community heroes gained praise from a wide range of celebrities. Pupils are proud that they received a signed football from Cardiff City Football Club to celebrate their achievements.

When they are required to attend the PRU, the majority of pupils attend regularly. Many of these pupils improve their attendance appropriately compared to their previous placements. For these pupils, this represents sound progress. However, due to arrangements for around half of the pupils to only attend the PRU on a part-time basis, these pupils do not have access to a full-time education and this limits their progress.

A few pupils re-integrate successfully into their mainstream schools or learning resource bases from the PRU. The number of fixed-term exclusions is declining and there have been no permanent exclusions over the past three years.

Teaching and learning experiences

The PRU successfully provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is responsive to the diverse range of needs of individual pupils.

Curriculum planning responds well to pupils' interests and current events such as the FIFA football world cup, that has provided pupils with worthwhile opportunities to research the geography of individual countries. The curriculum includes a wide range of outdoor education activities such as rock climbing, paddle boarding and cycling. Teachers provide suitable opportunities to write diary entries about these experiences, which support pupils to identify the skills they acquire and reflect upon their progress.

The health and well-being area of learning experiences provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop social and emotional skills. Lessons on current news events such as Wales reaching and subsequently exiting the world cup challenge pupils to consider how to build their own personal resilience when dealing with disappointment. The PRU also develops suitable opportunities for pupils to improve their social interactions with peers through games such as cards, draughts, basketball and football. As a consequence, many pupils show positive social interaction and behaviour in lessons, break time and lunchtime. However, the

coverage of important areas of study such as the mandatory relationships and sexuality education is inconsistent.

The PRU is making purposeful progress in delivering the Curriculum for Wales. The four purposes, statements of what matters and progression steps are central to curriculum plans and are supported by effective classroom displays. There is a wide range of well-planned activities within units of work such as 'living things' and 'Stone Age to Iron Age'. These activities provide pupils with a breadth of experiences across all areas of learning.

Staff collect a suitable range of pupil assessment information. These assessments include baseline assessments and teacher evaluations on social, emotional and behavioural aspects of pupil development. These support an assessment on a pupil's readiness to return to their mainstream school. However, staff do not use the assessments effectively enough to track and monitor pupil progress in their development of skills. Further, teachers' long and mid-term planning to ensure the progression of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, including applying these skills across the curriculum, is underdeveloped. In addition, planning for pupils to develop their digital skills is at an early stage of development.

Staff provide suitable opportunities for pupils to learn and use simple Welsh phrases. They promote pupils' understanding and appreciation of Welsh culture through learning about influential Welsh people such as Dylan Thomas, Tom Jones and Tanni Grey-Thompson and celebrating their successes. However, the provision for pupils to develop Welsh language and communication skills is insufficiently developed across the PRU.

Most teaching is successful at engaging pupils in learning. Teachers use effective questioning strategies to consolidate prior learning and to evaluate pupils' understanding in lessons. They use appropriate subject language, ask relevant, open-ended questions, share learning intentions with pupils and demonstrate up-to-date subject knowledge.

Although the PRU reviews pupils' part-time timetables as part of the regular half termly reviews, there are no secure plans in place to ensure that all pupils are supported to attend full-time. Around half the pupils only attend the PRU on a part-time basis and require additional interventions and strategies to ensure increased engagement in learning. Limitations on the capacity within the PRU impact on the ability to increase the curriculum offer for more pupils. This has a significant impact on the learning and progress of around half the pupils.

Staff and pupil relationships are strong across the PRU. Staff have a valuable understanding of pupil needs, particularly in relation to their vulnerability and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They are swift to challenge inappropriate language and maintain high standards of courtesy, respect and manners.

The PRU makes effective use of the limited space across the site. Staff take pride in maintaining a stimulating learning environment and they celebrate pupils' work. In addition, purposeful displays give valuable opportunities for pupils to support their own learning. For example, an interactive display encourages pupils to evaluate their work.

Across the PRU, the quality and impact of teachers' feedback to pupils is too variable. Teachers provide positive and encouraging oral feedback to pupils during lessons. In a minority of cases, teachers provide specific and helpful feedback that enables pupils to learn from their mistakes and make suitable progress. However, the majority of feedback, including written comments, is not sufficiently precise or is related to pupils' effort rather than the quality of their work. Consequently, pupils do not have a secure enough understanding of what they need to do in order to improve.

The PRU keeps parents and carers regularly informed about what their child has been learning through regular review meetings, weekly contact from teachers and annual written reports.

Care, support and guidance

The PRU provides pupils with a caring and supportive learning environment. Staff understand and respond to pupils' emotional and well-being needs well. For example, during lessons they support pupils calmly with well-established classroom routines and are sensitive to pupils' needs. As a result, many pupils engage in learning and settle appropriately to the routines of the day.

Staff at the PRU liaise suitably with parents and carers on a regular basis. The teacher in charge, alongside relevant professionals, establishes beneficial relationships with parents and carers by maintaining effective lines of communication. The well-established parenting project supports parents well and enables them to raise any issues or concerns in addition to gaining valuable support from professionals involved in their child's learning.

The PRU has well-established links with an appropriate range of external agencies. These include the educational welfare service as well as support from other professionals such as an educational psychologist and the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) teams. This multi-agency working supports a joined-up approach to supporting pupils and their families well.

Arrangements to promote positive behaviour are clear and well understood. Staff apply the PRU's behaviour policy consistently and the PRU records incidents relating to challenging behaviour appropriately. The PRU provides a suitable range of opportunities to support pupils when the environment they are in is causing them too much stress. However, there are limited dedicated spaces for pupils to use to help regulate their behaviours.

The PRU produces useful one-page profiles for all pupils which includes suitable information about how best to support them. In addition, there are valuable well-being and resilience action plans, created by the pupils, which outline effective strategies to support individuals to manage their emotions.

Teachers hold regular valuable pupil progress meetings which involve parents and carers alongside professionals, including representatives from the pupil's mainstream school. However, although targets are set during these meetings, the PRU does not track and monitor these sufficiently. In addition, targets are not aligned well enough to the identified needs of pupils on their one-page profiles.

Nearly all pupils are supported by staff to access their mainstream schools at least weekly. Over the course of the academic year, a few pupils are supported to

successfully transition back full time. Close links with local schools allow staff to maintain contact and offer support to both staff and pupils to strengthen these transition arrangements.

The health and well-being curriculum develops pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe successfully. These messages for pupils are reinforced across the curriculum and pastoral time to further support pupil awareness and understanding. These approaches are supported by external agencies such as the local community police and effectively support pupils to develop the skills they need to stay safe and make more informed and healthy choices.

Pupils have the opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect their life in the PRU. For example, the school council recently successfully changed the food at lunchtime to include baguettes. However, due to the infrequency of planned opportunities, the ability of pupils to influence the work of the PRU is limited.

There is an appropriate culture of safeguarding at the PRU. Staff follow appropriate procedures to ensure that pupils receive effective support and protection. Staff at all levels are alert to the signs of possible abuse and neglect. All staff undertake regular beneficial training to keep pupils and themselves safe. The designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) understand the PRU's arrangements for safeguarding and respond to safeguarding concerns appropriately. The PRU has sound safer recruitment procedures, supported appropriately by the local authority.

Leadership and management

The leadership of the PRU is provided by the teacher-in-charge, whose work is overseen by the headteacher of Cwmpawd and by the management committee, in conjunction with the local authority.

The teacher-in-charge provides effective day-to-day leadership for the PRU. He provides strong levels of support for the teaching team and is highly visible around the PRU. Staff across the PRU work closely together and have a strong understanding of the emotional needs of pupils. As a result, the PRU provides a caring and nurturing community that supports the development of staff and pupils' well-being effectively. Pupils feel safe and that their voice is listened to.

The management committee for the PRU has, since September 2021, taken on responsibility for overseeing Cwmpawd, in addition to its statutory responsibilities for oversight of the registered PRU. The chair of the management committee knows the PRU well, has a strong understanding of its strengths and areas for development, and provides valuable support to the teacher-in-charge. However, other members of the management committee have a less secure understanding of the work of the PRU. Members of the committee have appropriate experience relevant to provision for vulnerable learners in areas such as safeguarding or outdoor education.

The committee meets regularly, and agendas cover suitable items to do with the provision for vulnerable learners across the authority. Much of the committee's initial work has been concerned with establishing principles to guide the development of the Cwmpawd project. Recent meetings reflect increased scrutiny of matters specifically to do with the PRU. However, the additional scope of the committee's

responsibilities since its reorganisation mean that members do not consistently provide the PRU with an appropriate level of scrutiny and challenge.

Reports to the management committee from the headteacher and teacher-in-charge provide relevant information about aspects of the PRU's work, for example in relation to teaching and learning reviews, safeguarding and performance management processes. However, overall, these reports lack sufficient detail about the progress and attendance of pupils to enable committee members to challenge leaders constructively. Further, members do not have the necessary first-hand knowledge of the PRU based on their own visits and direct contact with staff and pupils to inform this aspect of their role accurately. Members of the committee do not provide a broad enough representation of the education community, and this inhibits the degree of challenge they are able to provide.

The PRU has suitable arrangements to evaluate its work, particularly in relation to issues that support individual pupils' well-being and learning. The teacher-in-charge receives valuable support from the PRU's school improvement partner and others to assist with evaluating the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum. These activities identify many of the PRU's strengths and areas for development. They link well to Curriculum for Wales and additional learning needs (ALN) reforms. There are worthwhile professional learning opportunities that support the development of staff well, particularly in relation to meeting pupils' emotional and behavioural needs.

Overall, however, leaders do not use the results of self-evaluation activities well enough to identify shortcomings in pupils' progress and attendance to inform the PRU's improvement planning.

In addition, improvement priorities set out in the PRU's development planning do not identify well enough the other areas for development identified by staff and the inspection team on this visit. These include, for example, shortcomings in accommodation in relation to the growing complexity of pupils' needs, or the lack of an appropriate staffing structure at the PRU to provide support for the teacher-in-charge. The teacher-in-charge does not have a delegated decision-making in relation to a budget or direct access to grant funding streams. These arrangements restrict his ability to plan strategically over time, or to adapt the provision flexibly to meet the needs of pupils referred to the PRU. For example, the PRU has only recently been able to appoint a full team of permanent teaching assistants to support pupils.

The headteacher meets regularly with the teacher-in-charge. Meetings address suitably matters to do with the operational oversight of the PRU. The teacher-in-charge retains oversight of all operational matters as well as leading the PRU's self-evaluation and strategic planning. However, the capacity to distribute leadership across the staff team within the PRU is limited which in turn restricts the ability of the team to carry out certain strategic functions. For example, leaders do not use the results of self-evaluation activities well enough to support constructive challenge by members of the management committee.

The teaching staff make creative use of the existing accommodation to provide a conducive learning environment for pupils' increasingly complex needs. However, the available space restricts opportunities to adapt space flexibly, to accommodate more pupils currently on part time timetables or to meet the well-being and planning needs

of staff during the day. The local authority has well-developed plans to extend the accommodation with two new classrooms and a staff room. However, the impact of this will be to reduce further the outdoor space.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body/management committee through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school/PRU and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors/management committee, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's/PRU's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school/PRU clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's/PRU's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's/PRU's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school/PRU has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school/PRU documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body/management committee, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

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

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.