



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

A report on

Eastward House School

Date of inspection: June 2023

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Eastward House School

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.

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.

There are currently 31 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.

The school manager has been at the school since 2021 and is supported by a team of six teachers and twelve learning support staff.

This is the school's first monitoring visit since registration.

Main findings

Strengths

Eastward House offers a welcoming atmosphere where all staff know the pupils well and place a high priority on their well-being.

There are positive and purposeful working relationships between staff and pupils. As a result, many pupils who attend regularly engage well in learning and settle quickly into the routines of the school day.

Teaching staff provide worthwhile learning activities that are well matched to pupils' individual needs and interests. In addition, pupils access a wide range of exciting and motivational experiences such as residential visits to London and Edinburgh. As a result, many pupils are motivated and engaged in their learning.

The school has developed a range of valuable partnerships, which enrich the opportunities offered to pupils. For example, beneficial links with the local university offer interesting literacy and numeracy sessions and allow pupils to access the national athletics centre. These experiences positively support the development of pupils' confidence and self-esteem and help them to plan for the next steps in their lives.

Areas for development

Since the last visit, the school has made limited progress in addressing the recommended areas for action.

Roles and responsibilities across the school lack clarity. Team meetings are generally informal and records of meetings are not precise enough to enable the tracking of agreed actions. As a result, staff do not understand their accountability for pupil standards and well-being.

The current staffing structure does not allow the school to quality assure its work well enough. Further, a consistent approach to the collection, monitoring, and analysis of evidence by leaders is under-developed. As a result, leaders cannot robustly evaluate the impact of their work.

Leaders do not have a strategic approach to develop the skills of staff. As a result, staff are not further developing their skills to support pupils in their learning and effectively support their additional learning needs.

The school does not provide a purposeful, stimulating environment for learning and many areas of the school are under-developed. There is not sufficient dedicated space for pupils to self-regulate away from other pupils or to meet their sensory needs. As a result, the school does not meet all the additional learning needs of pupils as identified on their statements of special educational need or individual development plan.

At the time of the inspection there were pupils on roll at the school whose primary need was outside the registration of the school.

The school does not comply with the Independent School Standards (Wales) 2003.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003
- R2 Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all staff at the school
- R3 Implement quality assurance processes to evaluate the standards of pupils' work, pupil progress and the quality of teaching
- R4 Ensure that the learning environment is appropriate to meet the needs of all pupils

Compliance with the standards for registration

Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school

The school does not fully meet the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school should:

- Ensure that where pupils have a statement, the education provided should fulfil its requirements [1(2)(e)]

Standard 2: The spiritual, moral, and cultural development 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 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school does not fully meet the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school should:

- Ensure they have a satisfactory level of fire safety, identified by its risk assessment under Part II Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, as amended 1999, and by any report from the Fire Authority [3(5)]

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 the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Standard 7: The manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school does not fully meet the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school should:

- Ensure that written records of all complaints are kept, indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing. [7(j)]

Recommendation regarding continued registration

When considering this school's registration the Welsh Government may wish to have regard to the following recommendation:

The school does not currently meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. To comply fully with these requirements, the school should address the issues identified above for each standard.

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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