



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

**A report on**

**The Potteries**

**Date of inspection: February 2024**

**by**

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education**

**and Training in Wales**

**This report is also available in Welsh.**

## About The Potteries

The Potteries is an independent special school, near Newtown in Powys. The school is owned and managed by CareTech Community Services Ltd, a private limited company. The proprietor owns children's homes across Wales, England and Scotland. The school is co-located within a children's home.

The Potteries is an assessment centre; pupils attend a 26-week programme at the school before moving on to long-term placements.

There are currently four pupils on the school roll. Their ages range from 11 years to 16 years. All pupils have looked after child (LAC) status and come from both Welsh and English local authorities. Two of the pupils have either an individual development plan or an education, health and care plan. The primary identified need is social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

There are 26 support staff across care and education, which includes two managers.

The headteacher has been in post since 2012 and is the only teacher at the school.

The school's most recent inspection was in November 2017 and the most recent annual monitoring visit was in December 2022.

## Main findings

### Strengths

- Pupils that attend The Potteries are polite and respectful of themselves, others and their environment. They engage willingly and with considerable maturity in discussions with fellow pupils, staff and visitors.
- Relationships between all pupils and all staff are a significant positive feature of the school and this helps create an environment in which pupils feel safe and secure.
- Pupils fully engage in sessions. They work independently and are provided with sensitive and timely support when required. All pupils appreciate the support that they receive whilst at the school and the genuine interest that staff show in them, not just as pupils, but as individuals.
- Overall, pupils' attendance is significantly higher than in their previous school placements.

### Areas for development

- Pupils benefit from a wide range of curriculum experiences with the possibility of following accredited programmes in independence skills such as basic food hygiene and cooking. In addition, sport and other recreational pursuits are also accredited. However, there are no opportunities for pupils to be accredited in for example literacy, numeracy or information and communication technology.
- The school appropriately supports pupils in raising their ambitions and aspirations for the future. However, the ability of the school to adequately meet those ambitions through the curriculum is limited. For example, there are very limited resources and capacity to teach subjects at GCSE level.
- The systematic use of assessment information to inform planning and track pupils' progress is underdeveloped.

## Recommendations

### The school should:

- R1 Extend the use of meaningful accreditation to include literacy, numeracy and ICT
- R2 Continue to develop a systematic approach to using all available information on pupils to strategically plan for the progressive development of skills across the curriculum
- R3 Improve provision, including staffing, so that pupils can study a range of courses at GCSE level

## **Progress in addressing recommendations from previous visit or inspection report**

### **R1. Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003**

At the time of the last annual monitoring visit the school could not provide evidence of the pre-employment checks for the headteacher. The required information has now been provided.

### **R2. Improve strategic planning and provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills across the curriculum**

The school uses a range of assessments to provide information on any additional learning needs that pupils may have and to establish a baseline in their literacy and numeracy skills. However, the systematic use of this information to inform planning and track pupils' progress is underdeveloped.

### **R3. Ensure that support staff have suitable skills and training to meet pupils' learning needs**

Since the last visit, just under a quarter of staff have completed a level 3 qualification in supporting teaching and learning. There are plans that all current children's home staff complete this training. The desire that all newly appointed children's home staff complete such training has not been adopted as company policy.

## **Compliance with the standards for registration**

### **Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school**

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 1.

### **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**

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 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**

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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