

A report on

Ysgol Tan y Gaer

**Bryn Tirion Hall
Mold Road
Caergwrle
Flintshire
LL12 9HA**

Date of inspection: February 2025

by

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

About Ysgol Tan y Gaer

Name of provider	Ysgol Tan y Gaer
Proprietor status	The school is part of QEwC Ltd., a private limited company.
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent ALN specialist
Residential provision?	Yes
Number of pupils on roll	11
Pupils of statutory school age	10
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
<p>School context:</p> <p>Ysgol Tan y Gaer is an independent school set in a rural location between Wrexham and Flintshire. The school has generous grounds, which include a games pitch and a wooded area, with access to a range of nature walks nearby. The school is part of QEwC Ltd. who also operate two residential children's homes in the area.</p> <p>The school is registered to provide education for up to 20 pupils, aged 7 to 18 years old, who are facing challenges relating to social emotional and mental health difficulties. There are currently 11 pupils on roll. All pupils are resident within the organisation's residential homes and have a history of placement breakdowns and exclusion from mainstream schools. All pupils are placed by local authorities in Wales and most pupils have an individual development plan (IDP).</p> <p>The school's additional learning provision consists of individual therapeutic interventions, small class sizes, a high staff to pupil ratio, a bespoke curriculum, enhanced life education and regular social and emotional learning.</p> <p>The head of education has been in post since the school opened in the spring term of 2024. They are supported by two full time teachers. In addition, the school uses staff from the residential team to support learning both in and out of the classroom.</p>	

Main findings

Ysgol Tan y Gaer fosters a caring and supportive environment where positive relationships between staff and pupils are a key priority. The school provides an inclusive and nurturing atmosphere, with a particular focus on supporting pupils, many of whom face significant barriers to learning. The ethos of the school is underpinned by principles that promote individualised support, collaboration, and well-being with a clear vision of 'belong, learn, grow'. As a result, pupils feel safe, valued and encouraged to achieve their potential.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, with a clear focus on providing meaningful learning experiences that cater to individual needs. The school adopts a flexible approach to teaching and learning, which enables pupils to engage with subjects in a way that is relevant to their abilities and interests. Core subjects such as English, mathematics and science are complemented by valuable enrichment activities that promote creativity, physical well-being, and personal development.

Most pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills appropriately and make suitable use of them in their learning, for example writing persuasive letters to the care home manager to request additional budget for healthy food items. However, planning for the progressive development of skills within the curriculum is in the early stages of development.

The school provides valuable vocational learning opportunities that equip pupils with essential skills for their future pathways. Through partnerships with national youth projects, pupils develop science, technology, and enterprise skills. Strong links with local organisations, such as a nearby farm, allow pupils to gain hands-on experience in animal care, including cleaning, exercising, and learning specialist skills like alpaca toenail trimming.

The school uses community partnerships to enrich learning by fostering personal development and broadening pupils' global awareness. For example, collaboration with a local coffee charity working with Ugandan producers enables pupils to design packaging, develop a website, and sell coffee at youth markets, enhancing their business and communication skills. These experiences ensure that pupils develop a broad skill set that prepares them effectively for their next steps.

The school has created a bespoke framework for ongoing assessment and progress tracking, underpinned by the Curriculum for Wales. It has begun to implement baseline testing and drawn up an appropriate review and re-testing schedule. However, the school's planned use of assessment data is in the very early stages of implementation, and it is too early to evaluate its impact on pupil outcomes.

Staff have a clear focus on pupil well-being, with clear structures in place to provide individualised support. Staff work closely with care and therapy teams to ensure a consistent and holistic approach. Weekly ‘chat’ sessions and specialist training for staff help to support pupils’ social and emotional needs well.

Pupils are supported in education by members of the residential care team. Leaders are developing a sound awareness of the skill set of the staff team and use this to plan appropriately engaging activities for pupils. For example, residential staff contribute to pupils’ educational experiences through activities such as vehicle maintenance and outdoor education. However, changing shift patterns in the care team limit the impact of these activities.

The school’s approach to behaviour management is effective, fostering trust and understanding. As a result, many pupils show a reduction in incidents of challenging behaviour and an increase in engagement with their learning over time. Nearly all pupils attend regularly, representing significant progress from their starting points.

Leadership is effective, with a clear strategic vision focused on learning and well-being. The head of education and staff team work collaboratively to implement policies that support pupils’ holistic development. Governance structures provide strong accountability, and leaders demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement, ensuring that the school continues to meet the needs of its learners.

Recommended areas for action

- Continue to develop the curriculum to include planning for the progressive development of skills within the curriculum
- Embed and evaluate the use of assessment data to monitor pupil progress effectively and inform future teaching and learning strategies

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 2024. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

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

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

The suitability of proprietors and staff

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

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

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

The provision of information

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

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

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

Recommendation regarding 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 2024.

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 (Wales) Regulations 2024. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework

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