

**A report on**

**Greenfields School**

**Graig Y Saeson Farm  
Forge Road  
Bassaleg  
Newport  
NP10 8AT**

**Date of inspection: February 2025**

**by**

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

## About Greenfields School

Name of provider	Greenfields School
Proprietor status	CareTech Community Services Ltd
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent special
Residential provision?	Yes
Number of pupils on roll	16
Pupils of statutory school age	16
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/05/2017
Start date of inspection	17/02/2025

### School context:

Greenfields is an independent special school located in a suburb of Newport. 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 registered to provide education for up to 30 pupils aged 9 to 16 years who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). It caters for a mix of residential and day placements.

The school has eight classrooms and a forest school area.

There are currently 16 pupils on the roll. Four are primary age and the remaining are of a secondary school age. Many pupils are looked-after by their local authority. Many pupils have an individual development plan (IDP) or an education health and care plan (EHCP).

The school had its last full inspection in May 2017. It had an annual monitoring visit in February 2024.

Since that last annual monitoring visit there has been a significant change in staffing.

The interim headteacher has been in post since November 2024 and the interim deputy head from February 2025.

## Summary

Since 2023, there has been significant instability in leadership and staffing, which has had a detrimental impact on the learning experiences, well-being and outcomes for pupils. Staff too have been affected by these changes but generally remain committed to the pupils. The leadership team were appointed in the last two months prior to the inspection. Leaders have made limited progress with addressing recommendations from previous visits.

The culture of safeguarding at the school requires significant improvement. Newly reviewed policies for safeguarding and behaviour are not yet fully embedded. Further, staff working at the school lack awareness, training and understanding on these policies and how to effectively implement them.

School staff develop positive relationships with pupils. They work flexibly to support pupils in their learning and show patience and resilience.

Teachers plan learning experiences linked to pupils' interests. However, planning does not link well enough to the pupils' individual learning needs. As a result, many activities do not provide sufficient challenge or opportunities for pupils to learn and make progress.

The school does not comply with the Independent School Standards (Wales) 2024.

## Main evaluation

### Culture of Safeguarding

Safeguarding policies and procedures at the school do not meet the Independent School Standards (Wales) 2024.

The newly appointed leadership team have reviewed and put in place new safeguarding policies. However, these are not yet fully embedded. As a result, there is an inconsistent approach to managing safeguarding incidents and too many staff members working in the school are unclear about the procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns.

Staff and pupils do not feel comfortable reporting concerns to senior leaders. Staff told the inspection team that they felt that their concerns and complaints are not taken seriously. There is a lack of clear communication from senior leaders about the importance of safeguarding, and this is reflected in the school's culture.

The school's system for recording and monitoring safeguarding incidents is not being effectively used to ensure that concerns are responded to in a timely manner. There are inconsistencies in how incidents are documented. Further, there is a lack of trust between parents and carers, staff, and senior leaders. Staff at the school do not receive safeguarding training in line with statutory requirements. Too many of these staff members have not received school specific training on child protection or recent Prevent training. The recording of safeguarding training is not robust.

The school does not record pupil attendance accurately. This hinders the school's ability to recognise any patterns, trends or the progress pupils may make in their attendance or engagement in learning.

Safer recruitment processes in the school are not robust and do not meet requirements.

The school does not provide adequate support for the most vulnerable pupils, most notably to those who are not receiving full time education at the school.

### **Well-being**

School staff develop positive relationships with pupils. Many demonstrate resilience and patience, working flexibly to support pupils in their learning.

Staff work appropriately to meet the emotional well-being of pupils, ensuring that they arrive at school settled and have breakfast before engaging in learning. The school provides well-being interventions for each pupil on a 1:1 basis to develop their emotional literacy and social skills.

Overall, pupils do not attend well enough. This is further impacted by the use of part time timetables, which are overused and not regularly monitored. A few pupils have not engaged in full time education for long periods of time. These issues have a significant negative impact on pupils' well-being and learning.

Pupils are beginning to benefit from opportunities to develop leadership skills and influence decision-making through the very recently re-established school council. However, it is too soon to evaluate the impact of this work.

The school provides pupils with a range of enriching activities to develop their social, moral and cultural understanding. For example, during Black history month the school welcomed a Rastafarian to speak to pupils and prepare an Ital meal. However, staff and pupils do not have confidence in the school's systems to identify and robustly address intolerance of other with different backgrounds and beliefs.

The newly established leadership team have developed a range of useful documents about pupils' personal histories, behaviours, their triggers and how to best support them. However, the school has not provided staff with suitable professional learning to meet the wider range of pupil needs at the school. Further, over recent months there have been changes to the school's behaviour policy, which are not fully implemented. As a result, support for pupils to manage their behaviour is inconsistent.

The school has a range of electronic systems to track and monitor pupil behaviours, the use of physical interventions and sanctions. This information is not routinely monitored and used by leaders to evaluate practice at the school and influence improvement planning. Further, there is no evaluation of the use and impact of exclusion at a whole-school level.

There has been a period of time with insufficient tracking and monitoring of incidences of bullying. New leaders have recently established systems to resolve this. However, it is too soon to evaluate the impact.

### **Teaching and curriculum**

The quality of curriculum provided at the school does not meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

The school does not provide a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of pupils. Consequently, pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of during their time in school.

The curriculum is not structured well enough to identify the key skills pupils need to be successful. As a result, many pupils struggle to engage with their work, leading to low levels of attendance and also many behaviour disruptions across the school.

In the most effective lessons, pupils respond to questioning and share their ideas suitably, for example when discussing how to be ecofriendly. A minority of pupils follow well-established routines, and staff act as positive role models with clear expectations. Pupils benefit from education that challenges them, for example discussing the role of 'Mr Billings' in 'an Inspector calls' or discussing the challenges of knife crime in society.

Teachers plan learning experiences linked to pupils' interests. For example, pupils are taught childcare and access equine sessions. However, work is not always planned well enough to meet the additional learning needs of individual pupils.

In the majority of lessons, teachers' feedback does not always help pupils effectively enough to assess their progress. Pupils are unclear of their individual targets and are unable to identify what they need to do next to improve their work.

Pupils are provided with a range of beneficial enrichment opportunities that supplement their engagement with the wider community. For example, pupils visit a local pottery centre, Big Pit and St Fagans. Pupils and staff speak positively about weekly attendance at 'free running', where during these sessions pupils suitably develop their physical and social skills.

The school is in the early stages of promoting the United Nations Rights of the Child and has a clear and comprehensive action plan in place to become a Silver Rights Respecting School. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is underdeveloped and careers advice and guidance is not currently being offered effectively to all pupils.

## **Leadership**

Since 2023, there has been instability in the leadership of the school, with four headteachers during this period. This instability has significantly impacted the recruitment and retention of staff at all levels, leading to a lack of stability and quality in education for pupils. Furthermore, this has hindered the school's progress in meeting recommendations from previous inspections and addressing its own priorities for improvement. The newly formed senior leadership team is committed to the school, but the interim headteacher's new vision is still in the very early stages and too early to evaluate its impact.

During the period of instability, there was limited monitoring of the implementation of school policies across the school. At an organisational level, leaders fail to evaluate and review the school's policies and documentation robustly and in a timely manner to ensure that they align with changes to national legislation and guidance.

Performance management for staff is under-developed, limiting opportunities for formal professional dialogue with leaders and setting relevant targets. As a result, professional learning and development opportunities for school staff are not well linked to the needs of pupils, the school, or individual staff improvement priorities.

Support staff from the linked residential homes are not consistently aware of their roles in the classroom. Leaders have not focused enough on professional learning to support residential staff in understanding their roles and school policies, including safeguarding.

The inconsistent use of multiple school systems and processes to collect information about the work of the school hinders the ability of leaders to evaluate school practice and make meaningful improvements. The new school leadership team are in the very early stages of reviewing systems. However, the impact of this is too early to evaluate.

The wider organisation lacks a robust overview of teaching and learning standards and does not understand the challenges of establishing a positive safeguarding culture. Quality

assurance mechanisms and processes to evaluate teaching, learning and safeguarding at the school are not robust.

Leaders do not ensure that the quality of education at the school meets the needs of the individual pupils placed at the school by local authorities. As a result of the significant shortcomings highlighted in this report, placing authorities may wish to consider whether it is appropriate to place a pupil with this provider until they are fully addressed. Additionally, due to the significant areas of non-compliance with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 and the safeguarding concerns raised during the inspection, the Welsh Government may wish to recommend formally to the school that it should not accept new pupils until these matters have been addressed.

## **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**

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets a few of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure that a written policy on the independent school's curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively [2(1)(a)]
- Ensure the written policy, plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an IDP or a statement, do not undermine the fundamental values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and take into account the principles in Part 1 of the Convention [2(1)(b)]
- Ensure that full-time supervised education for all pupils of compulsory school age, which gives pupils experience in the following areas: language, communication, mathematics, science, technology, humanities, health, well-being and expressive arts [2(2)(a)]
- Ensure that pupils acquire skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. [2(2)(b)]

- Provide personal, social, and health education which— i) reflects the independent school's aims and ethos, and ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act [2(2)(d)]
- Provide for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner, enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options, and helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential [2(2)(e)]
- Ensure the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress, including providing differentiated opportunities where appropriate, and effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life [2(2)(h)]
- Enable pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught [2(3)(a)]
- Enable that the teaching fosters in pupils the application of intellectual, physical or creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves, [2(3)(b)]
- Ensure well planned lessons, effective teaching methods, suitable activities and wise management of learning time [2(3)(c)]
- Ensure that teaching demonstrates a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils and ensures these are taken into account in the planning of lessons, [2(3)(d)]
- Ensure that teaching demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught, [2(3)(e)]
- Ensure that the teaching uses effectively learning resources of a good quality, quantity and range, [2(3)(f)]
- Demonstrate that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and uses information from those assessments to plan teaching so that pupils can progress [2(3)(g)]
- Ensure effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly, [2(3)(h)]
- Ensure that teaching does not discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the 2010 Act [2(3)(k)]
- Ensure that the independent school has a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference either to the independent school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both. [3]



## **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure that principles are actively promoted which—
  - i) enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence,
  - ii) enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law,
  - iii) encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those within the independent school's community, those living and working in the locality in which the independent school is situated and to society more widely,
  - iv) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act,
  - v) provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in Wales and the United Kingdom more widely,
  - vi) assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions,
  - vii) encourage pupils to respect the fundamental values of democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, [4 (c)]

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets some of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the independent school, [6(a)]

- Ensure a written policy to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils is drawn up and effectively implemented [6(b)]
- Ensure the welfare of pupils at the independent school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy that includes assessment of activities undertaken outside of the independent school's premises [8(a)]
- Ensure all staff, supply staff, volunteers and pupils receive appropriate training in the independent school's safeguarding policy in accordance with any guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers in relation to safeguarding [10(a)]
- Ensure a written record of that training is maintained. [10(b)]
- Ensure that a written behaviour policy is drawn up and effectively implemented that—
  - (i) encourages and rewards good behaviour,
  - (ii) sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour,
  - (iii) has regard to any relevant guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers [11(a)]
- Ensure a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour. [11(b)]
- Ensure that bullying at the independent school is prevented so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy. [12]
- Ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy that includes consideration of activities outside of the independent school's premises. [13]
- Ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1). [14]
- Ensure that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of independent school staff. [16]
- Ensure that admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with regulations made under section 434 of the 1996 Act(1). [17]

### **The suitability of proprietors and staff**

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets some of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person—
  - (i) the person's identity,
  - (ii) the person's medical fitness,

- (iii) the person's right to work in the United Kingdom, and
- (iv) where appropriate, the person's qualifications, [20(2)(d)]
- Ensure in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in an independent school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any relevant guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers [20(2)(f)]
- Ensure the checks referred to in sub-paragraph (2) (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) must be completed before a person's appointment. [20(3)]
- Ensure (i) where an individual is registered with the DBS up-date service if the proprietor checks the individual's certificate status at least every three years; (ii) where an individual is not registered with the DBS up-date service if the proprietor applies for a DBS certificate in respect of that individual at least every three years, and the proprietor, having considered the information from the check or application, considers that the individual remains suitable for the position to which the individual is appointed; [23(a)]
- Ensure for the purposes of sub-paragraphs (a) to (d), where a DBS up-date service check has not been made or a DBS certificate has not been applied for in respect of any individual within a period of 3 years ending with the date on which these Regulations come into force, the first such check or application must be made within a period of 180 days beginning with the date that these Regulations come into force. [23(e)]
- Ensure a register in accordance with the independent school's policy on data retention which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (5) as is applicable to the independent school in question. [24(1)]

Ensure the register referred to in sub-paragraph (1) may be kept in electronic form, provided that the information recorded is capable of being reproduced in legible form. [24(2)]

- Ensure in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether—
  - (i) S's identity was checked,
  - (ii) a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act,
  - (iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, a suspension order or an interim suspension order,
  - (iv) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 142 or 167A of the 2002 Act, section 128 of the 2008 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction,

- (v) checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that S had the relevant qualifications,
- (vi) a DBS certificate was obtained in respect of S (or where S is registered with the DBS up-date service a check made of S's certificate status),
- (vii) a check of S's right to work in the United Kingdom was made, and
- (viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 20(2)(f), including the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained. [24 (3)(b)]

### **Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools**

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure the independent school buildings provide reasonable resistance to penetration by rain, snow, wind and moisture from the ground, [27(f)]
- Ensure classrooms allow effective teaching and do not compromise health and safety [27(j)]
- Ensure there is a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of decoration [27(q)]

### **The provision of information**

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure where a pupil with an individual development plan or statement is registered at the independent school, the independent school must provide such information to the local authority as may reasonably be required for the purpose of a statutory review of the individual development plan or statement. [28(8)]

### **The manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure that written records to be kept, in accordance with the independent school's policy on data retention, of all complaints, including whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the independent school as a result of those complaints and whether they were upheld, [29(j)]

## Safeguarding

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils give cause for concern.

## Recommendations

We have made five recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1. Strengthen the management of safeguarding and address the shortcomings identified during the inspection
- R2. Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024
- R3. Improve attendance
- R4. Ensure that the curriculum is sufficiently engaging, broad and balanced and prepares pupils well for their next stage in life and learning
- R5. Improve systems and processes to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school

## What happens next

Since the school does not meet the standards required for registration, the Welsh Government will require the proprietor to submit an action plan within a specified period of time. This plan will set out the steps that the school will take to meet the standards, and the timescale within which it will complete each step. The Welsh Government may then request Estyn to support the school through an improvement process.

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what actions 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/carers at the school.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and support staff through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors/proprietor(s), leaders and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work 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 lessons and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school had taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body (where appropriate), 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

## Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. ‘*most pupils...*’ or ‘*very few pupils...*’. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

## 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

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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