

A report on

Caban Aur

Date of inspection: February 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

This report is also available in Welsh

About Caban Aur

Name of provider	Caban Aur
Proprietor status	Ysgol Caban Aur is part of Afon Goch Children's Homes Limited, a private limited company
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent ALN specialist
Residential provision?	Yes
Number of pupils on roll	1
Pupils of statutory school age	1
Date of previous Estyn visit	26/06/2023
Start date of visit	12/02/2025

School context:

Ysgol Caban Aur is a small independent school set in its own grounds, in a rural setting on Ynys Môn, surrounded by a nature reserve.

The school is registered for up to two pupils aged 11 to 16 years who have a range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is currently one pupil on roll.

The school's additional learning provision consists of individual therapeutic interventions, very small class sizes, a high staff to pupil ratio, a bespoke curriculum and regular social and emotional learning through activities such as outdoor education.

At the time of the June 2022 monitoring visit, the school did not comply fully with Standards 1 and 3 of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations; The quality of education provided and the Welfare, health and safety of pupils. Inspectors visited the school in June 2023 to conduct a further monitoring visit. When inspectors arrived at the school, there were no pupils on roll. As a consequence, aspects of non-compliance from the 2022 visit were unable to be inspected. However, the school had made limited progress against the recommendations from the 2022 inspection and additional areas of non-compliance were identified.

The Welsh Government asked the school to produce a post-inspection action plan to address the areas of non-compliance. To comply fully with these requirements, the school was required to address the issues identified below for each standard:

Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school

The proprietor ensures 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(a)(a)]

The written policy, plans and schemes of work; take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an individual development plan 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)]

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)]

The proprietor ensures that pupils acquire skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy [2(2)(b)]

Personal, social, and health education which reflects the independent school's aims and ethos, and encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act [2(2)(d)]

The proprietor ensures that the school's curriculum provides the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress, including providing differentiated opportunities where appropriate, and i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life [2(2)(h)]

Standard 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The proprietor ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the independent school, a written policy to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils is drawn up and effectively implemented, and those arrangements and that policy have regard to any relevant guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers. [6]

Standard 6: The provision of information

The independent school must provide to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and on request to the Chief Inspector, the Welsh Ministers, or a body approved under section 163(1)(b) of the 2002 Act:

- the independent school's address, email address and telephone number, and the name of the head teacher [28(2)(a)]
- where the proprietor is an individual, that person's (aa) full name, (bb) direct business email address, (cc) telephone number (during term time and non-term time), (dd) correspondence address (during term time and non-term time), [28(2)b]
- particulars of the independent school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions; [28(2)e]
- particulars of the policies prepared under Part 1 of this Schedule, [28(3)(a)]
- particulars of the policies prepared under Part 3 of this Schedule, [28(3)(b)]
- particulars of the independent school's academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations and assessments resulting in a qualification, [28(3)(c)]
- details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, [28(3)(d)]
- the number of staff employed at the independent school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications, [28(3)(e)]
- the term dates for— (i) the current academic year, and (ii) the subsequent academic year, [28(3)(f)]
- the dates of any planned closures during the term dates made available under paragraph (f). [28(3)(g)]

Standard 7: The manner in which complaints are handled

The proprietor ensures that the complaints procedure is made available on the independent school's website, or where the independent school does not have a website, it is provided to pupils, the parents of pupils and of prospective pupils at the independent school [29(b)]

A team of HMI visited the school in November 2023, March 2024 and June 2024 to discuss the school's progress against their action plan. Subsequently, HMI visited the school in February 2025 to evaluate the school's compliance with the previously non-compliant standards.

Main findings

Since the last monitoring visit in 2023, leaders and staff have worked diligently to strengthen the school's provision. Staff show a strong sense of purpose and collaborate effectively to promote pupils' education and well-being. However, inconsistencies in staffing and the early-stage development of many policies and procedures hinder the school's ability to fully embed recent improvements.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for younger pupils, supported by appropriate schemes of work. Timetabled learning experiences effectively develop pupils' skills. However, the current staff team lacks the capacity to deliver a full curriculum up to GCSE level.

Pupils benefit from a broad range of educational activities, including outdoor education, which supports their personal and social development well. The school is in the early stages of embedding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into its curriculum.

Nearly all staff develop effective working relationships with pupils as a result of their understanding of their abilities and contexts. Their interactions with pupils are characterised by patience and respect. Teachers are effective models of calm behaviour and clear communication. As a result, pupils are engaged in their learning and demonstrate a clear desire to succeed.

The introduction of a structured assessment framework is improving the school's ability to track pupil progress. However, while leaders have refined tracking systems, they have not yet evaluated the full impact of the new curriculum on pupil progress. The implementation of baseline and formative assessments is ongoing, and further work is needed to embed these processes fully.

Leaders have made significant progress in addressing areas of non-compliance identified during the last monitoring visit. They have invested substantially in resources and classroom environments, enhancing the overall learning experience. They have also strengthened communication with stakeholders, ensuring that key policies and information are readily accessible, for example through the new, informative website.

Leaders have updated safeguarding policies in line with Welsh Government guidance, and all education staff have completed basic safeguarding and Prevent training. However, the school is in the early stages of implanting a formal training plan to ensure ongoing compliance with safeguarding and Prevent duty for the wider staff team.

Leaders have introduced performance management and professional development opportunities, such as lesson observations and peer observations. However, these initiatives remain in the early stages and it is too soon to evaluate their impact. In addition, staffing inconsistencies and the absence of a substantive headteacher create challenges in maintaining stability and ensuring sustainable, long-term improvement.

Ysgol Caban Aur has made meaningful progress and there is no evidence that the school does not comply with the Independent School Standards. However, further development is required to ensure long-term stability and consistency in educational provision.

Recommendations for action

- Strengthen leadership capacity to provide sustained strategic direction and oversight
- Ensure that the school is fully staffed with appropriately qualified teachers to support the delivery of a full curriculum
- Further embed and evaluate the impact of the new curriculum and assessment frameworks
- Continue refining and implementing key policies and procedures to ensure consistency and long-term effectiveness

Compliance with the standards 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

This standard was not considered on this visit.

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

This standard was not considered on this visit.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

This standard was not considered on this visit.

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 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 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 Act 1998.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website:

<http://www.estyn.gov.wales>

This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).