

A report on
Bryn Tirion Hall School

**Bersham Road
Bersham
Wrexham
LL14 4HS**

Date of inspection: June 2026

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Bryn Tirion Hall School

Name of provider	Bryn Tirion Hall School
Proprietor status	Bersham Schools Limited
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent Special
Residential provision?	No
Number of pupils on roll	100
Pupils of statutory school age	100
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	01/06/2026

School context:

Bryn Tirion Hall School is located on the outskirts of Wrexham. It is an Independent School for up to 100 pupils aged from 7 to 18 years. The school is owned by Bersham Schools Ltd. The pupils that attend have a range of additional learning needs which include social and emotional needs and autism. There are currently 100 pupils on roll. Pupils range from 7 to 16 years. All pupils have an individual development plan or an education, health and care plan. A minority of pupils have looked-after child status. Most pupils are placed by Welsh local authorities. A few are placed by English local authorities.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2024

The school's last annual monitoring visit was in April 2024. At the time of the visit, the school complied fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

Summary

Bryn Tirion Hall School provides high quality facilities and a supportive therapeutic learning environment that helps many pupils re-engage successfully with education. Nearly all staff know pupils exceptionally well and develop positive, trusting relationships that help them feel safe, valued and ready to learn. The school's trauma-informed and autism-aware approaches are embedded across all aspects of school life and contribute strongly to pupils' emotional well-being and engagement. Although many pupils improve their attendance over time, overall attendance remains too low.

The school provides a broad and flexible curriculum that is well matched to pupils' individual needs, interests and aspirations. Learning experiences are engaging and relevant, and include a strong emphasis on outdoor learning, enterprise and the use of digital technology. Nearly all pupils have opportunities to travel abroad on a ski trip and take part in class camps. These experiences support pupils to develop their social and independence skills successfully.

Most pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points. They develop their literacy, numeracy and wider skills well and become increasingly confident and independent learners. However, the quality of teaching is not consistent across the school, and learning targets do not always help pupils understand clearly what they need to do next in their learning.

The school's therapeutic provision is a particular strength. Staff apply consistent approaches to supporting pupils' emotional, communication and sensory needs and use this understanding effectively to promote participation in learning.

Nearly all pupils contribute meaningfully to decision-making through reviews, school council activities and leadership roles. They feel listened to and valued and understand how their views influence school life.

Proprietors and leaders provide effective support and challenge and have established a strong culture of reflection and continuous improvement. Self-evaluation, school improvement planning and professional learning are closely aligned and contribute positively to pupils' experiences and outcomes.

Main evaluation

Bryn Tirion Hall School provides a highly supportive and values-driven therapeutic learning environment that enables many pupils to re-engage successfully with education and make strong progress in their well-being, personal development and learning.

Learning experiences and curriculum

The school provides a broad and flexible curriculum that supports progression in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding whilst remaining responsive to individual needs and real-life contexts. Learning experiences are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current issues that affect pupils' lives, including online safety, relationships and wider societal issues.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of engaging learning experiences in meaningful contexts. Many develop communication, employability and independence skills through enterprise activities. For example, younger pupils learn about managing stock, ordering supplies, serving customers and handling transactions through the Gwyn class café. In technology lessons, pupils use computer-aided design software to create, test and refine products before manufacturing them using 3D printers. For example, they make bread stamps, laptop stands and fidget spinners, adapting their designs following testing and evaluation. Pupils also benefit from practical science experiences that develop their enquiry skills and deepen their understanding of scientific concepts.

The school makes highly effective use of technology to support learning. An online learning platform broadens pupils' understanding of digital tools and enables real-time feedback during lessons. Many pupils also develop their digital communication and problem-solving skills through activities involving artificial intelligence, refining prompts and adapting language to achieve successful outcomes.

The school's arrangements provide valuable information about pupils' learning and development, and most pupils are aware of their learning goals. However, personalised targets are not always precise enough to help pupils understand what they need to do next to achieve them.

A particular strength of the curriculum is an extensive outdoor learning programme where nearly all pupils participate in a range of experiences that develop confidence, resilience, teamwork and independence. Activities include bushcraft, climbing, navigation, paddle sport awards, kayaking across the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and residential experiences in Eryri. Each class has an annual residential camp, where pupils further develop their outdoor and social skills. In addition, the school's long-established annual ski programme to France provides most pupils with the opportunity to travel overseas, often for the first

time, broadening their horizons and further enhancing their confidence and independence.

Teaching and support for learning

Across the school, nearly all staff develop highly positive and trusting relationships with pupils. They know pupils exceptionally well and have a secure understanding of their individual learning, communication, social and emotional needs. Robust admission processes alongside close collaboration between education and therapeutic staff ensure that each pupil's strengths and barriers to learning are fully understood before they start the school. This helps to ensure that individual pupil support is tailored, reliable, and responsive.

Nearly all staff create calm and supportive learning environments where pupils feel safe, engage positively in learning and develop increasing confidence as learners. This is particularly evident at the start of the school day, when 'morning jobs' provide well-established routines and highly personalised learning activities to help pupils settle quickly and engage purposefully in learning. For many pupils these levels of engagement represent significant progress from previous experiences of education where attendance and readiness to learn were substantial barriers.

Teachers adapt learning effectively to meet pupils' individual needs, interests and aspirations. They provide clear explanations, use visual supports and practical activities well and tailor learning appropriately to help pupils access the curriculum. Classroom support assistants and the pastoral team work closely alongside teachers to support pupils' engagement, emotional regulation and participation in learning whilst encouraging increasing independence.

Many teaching staff use a range of assessment information and their detailed knowledge of pupils to identify starting points, monitor progress and plan next steps in learning. Increasingly, staff use assessment information to identify gaps in learning and provide targeted intervention.

Where teaching is most effective, teachers use assessment information purposefully, adapting learning successfully in response to pupils' needs and providing appropriate levels of challenge. They use their understanding of pupils' emotional well-being, readiness to learn and individual circumstances skilfully to determine when and how to increase expectations and extend learning.

Despite these significant strengths, the quality of teaching is not consistent across the school. In a very few cases, teaching is overly directed and the pace of learning is too rapid for pupils to process new information, reflect on their learning or work independently. While most pupils engage positively throughout the day, a few find it more difficult to

sustain engagement later in the day as they prepare for transitions home. Although teachers often adapt activities appropriately to support pupils' changing needs and well-being, in a few cases these activities do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to build on their learning.

Progress and outcomes

The school provides a flexible and increasingly broad qualifications offer that combines GCSE, vocational and Entry Level pathways. Nearly all pupils achieve a worthwhile range of academic and vocational qualifications.

Most pupils make strong progress in developing their literacy skills. For example, younger pupils improve their reading fluency and confidence through targeted intervention programmes. Older pupils studying gothic horror texts such as *Frankenstein* and *Macbeth* analyse characters' motivations and plot development before applying these features successfully in their own extended writing. As a result, over time, they develop increasingly sophisticated analytical and creative writing skills.

Most pupils also develop their numeracy skills successfully and apply them confidently in practical and meaningful contexts. Younger pupils improve their understanding of number, sequencing and calculation, while older pupils develop increasingly secure mathematical understanding. Many pupils apply these skills purposefully through enterprise activities. For example, pupils involved in the school's car washing initiative calculate costs, handle payments and develop an understanding of wage slips and managing income. In technology lessons, pupils use measurement, scaling and accurate calculations when designing, testing and refining products using design software and 3D printers.

Across the school, most pupils make strong progress in developing their communication, social and independence skills. They become increasingly confident in expressing their views, working collaboratively and interacting positively with staff, peers and visitors. Many become increasingly independent learners and require less adult support over time.

Preparation for next steps

Leaders work purposefully with staff and external partners to ensure that pupils have access to meaningful experiences that broaden horizons. A well-established and highly effective careers programme carefully structured across both lower and upper school ensures clear individualised progression pathways. Strong partnerships with local further education colleges and Careers Wales provide pupils with up-to-date guidance and specialist input. Leaders make effective use of data to evaluate impact and ensure future

planning remains responsive to pupils' needs and local opportunities. As a result, pupils are well supported to make informed decisions about their next steps and are effectively prepared for future education, training or employment. Nearly all school leavers in 2025 progressed to their chosen post-16 destination and, where relevant, secured their preferred college placement.

Pupil voice and participation

Pupils discuss their rights confidently and understand how these relate to their well-being, relationships and responsibilities. Nearly all pupils contribute meaningfully to decision-making through reviews, school council activities and, in some cases, by setting their own learning targets. They report feeling heard and valued, reflecting the school's strong culture of respect and inclusion. Regular opportunities for consultation, such as meetings and assemblies, enable pupils to share their views and see the impact of their contributions, for example through the addition of outdoor play equipment. Through an active school council, pupils take on a range of leadership roles, including president, Welsh ambassador and safeguarding lead. Engagement with *Senedd yr Ifanc*, a regional youth parliament provides opportunities to consider wider issues affecting the local community.

Well-being and support

Leaders recognise the significant attendance challenges faced by many pupils and implement targeted strategies to improve engagement. As a result, many pupils with previously disrupted education show notable improvements in attendance and develop more positive attitudes to learning. However, overall attendance remains low, and a minority of pupils do not attend regularly enough.

A secure understanding of pupils' prior experiences, strengths and individual needs underpins the school's strong trauma-informed and autism-aware culture. As a result, therapeutic approaches are embedded consistently across all aspects of school life.

Spotlight 1: Therapeutic approaches improving participation in learning

At Bryn Tirion Hall school, individual profiles, behaviour support plans and therapeutic recommendations are shared effectively, ensuring that staff have a consistent understanding of pupils' emotional, communication and sensory needs. As a result, staff apply consistent approaches across all aspects of school life and use proactive strategies successfully to support emotional regulation, engagement and participation in learning.

The school's nurture provision strengthens this approach by providing targeted support for pupils who need additional help to develop emotional regulation, confidence and

readiness to learn. As a result, many pupils who have previously found it difficult to engage with education become more confident, resilient and trusting of adults, enabling them to engage more successfully in learning and school life.

Well-being support is underpinned by a strong understanding of behaviour as communication, with staff focusing on identifying and addressing underlying needs. Detailed analysis of behaviour, safeguarding and attendance data enables leaders to identify patterns and implement highly personalised, proactive support strategies.

The school's approach to promoting positive behaviour and reward systems such as 'Mega Moments' and 'ACE Olympics' has a demonstrable impact on engagement in learning. Pupils value these rewards which are well embedded across school life.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff understand their responsibilities well and respond confidently to concerns. Leaders work effectively with a wide range of agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive timely, coordinated support. Effective multi-agency working, including with mental health services, helps address barriers to learning and ensure that pupils benefit from well-integrated support that meets their needs.

Leading and improving

The owners of the school have successfully transitioned from principal and vice-principal roles to providing strategic support as school proprietors. Over several years, they have purposefully nurtured leaders from within the organisation, enabling the current leadership team to develop the skills and confidence needed to lead the school independently.

The proprietors provide effective support and challenge while maintaining a clear strategic focus. Through regular communication, visits, lesson observations and scrutiny of performance information, they maintain strong oversight without becoming involved in day-to-day operations. Their commitment to reflection, innovation and continuous improvement helps ensure that the school continues to evolve in response to pupils' needs.

The proprietors' strong understanding of the school's pupils, alongside their commitment to preparing young people for adulthood, ensures that strategic decisions remain firmly focused on improving pupils' life chances. They work effectively with leaders to secure the resources, staffing capacity and facilities needed to maintain high-quality learning and working environments for pupils and staff.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and use a wide range of first-hand evidence to inform improvement priorities. Staff at all

levels contribute to self-evaluation activities and share their knowledge and experiences to evaluate the impact of their work.

Leaders use pupil achievement and progress information effectively to support improvement and have strengthened assessment arrangements to provide more robust information for teaching, intervention and target setting. They evaluate the effectiveness of assessment and skills-tracking systems thoughtfully and are taking appropriate steps to simplify processes, improve consistency and strengthen the tracking of pupils' progress over time. This reflective approach demonstrates leaders' commitment to continuous improvement.

Professional learning and development

Professional learning is planned strategically in response to school priorities and the evolving needs of pupils. This focused approach contributes well to improved practice and better outcomes for pupils.

Spotlight: Building specialist expertise to meet pupils' complex needs

The school has developed a highly responsive approach to professional learning that is shaped directly by the evolving needs of its pupils. Internal specialists, including an educational psychologist and speech and language therapist, play key roles in developing staff expertise in areas such as communication, emotional regulation, behaviour support and trauma-informed practice. As a result, staff apply increasingly consistent approaches that support pupils' participation, well-being and progress.

Close alignment between self-evaluation processes, school improvement planning, performance review and professional learning ensures that improvement priorities translate into departmental and individual targets. This creates clear links between whole-school priorities, professional learning activities and individual responsibilities.

Performance review arrangements support accountability and professional growth effectively. Staff participate in regular discussions that focus on impact, outcomes and future development. Development objectives are adapted appropriately to different roles and include clear success criteria and monitoring arrangements. As a result, staff have a very strong understanding of how their individual responsibilities contribute to whole-school improvement and improved outcomes for pupils.

Parent and carer engagement

The school places a strong emphasis on effective partnerships with parents and carers. Effective communication and personalised support ensure that families are involved appropriately in decision-making and understand how they can work alongside the school to support their children's development. As a result, this collaborative approach contributes positively to pupils' well-being, attendance and engagement in learning.

Nearly all parents and carers speak highly of the school and the positive impact it has on their children's lives. Many describe the provision as transformative, helping their children re-engage with education, improve their well-being and achieve success where previous placements had been unsuccessful. Nearly all parents and carers feel listened to and valued. A few report that their children are experiencing success in learning for the first time.

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 that the school does not comply with this Standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this Standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this Standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this Standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this Standard.

The provision of information

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this Standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with this Standard.

Safeguarding

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Continue to strengthen strategies to improve attendance and support pupils to engage successfully with education
- R2 Strengthen the consistency of teaching by ensuring that learning activities maintain appropriate challenge and momentum throughout lessons, while remaining well matched to pupils' needs
- R3 Continue to refine the school's assessment and skills tracking arrangements and strengthen pupils' understanding of their next steps

What happens next

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/carers 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:

Publications Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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