



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb - Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**Report following monitoring  
Level of follow-up: special measures**

**Canolfan yr Afon  
Pontygof  
Ebbw Vale  
Blaenau Gwent  
NP23 5AZ**

**Date of visit: February 2015**

**by**

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

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**The monitoring team**

Ann Dackevych	Reporting Inspector
Sw Roberts	Team Inspector

## **Outcome of monitoring visit**

Canolfan yr Afon is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in February 2014.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the PRU from the list of PRUs requiring special measures.

## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **Recommendation 1: Address the shortcomings identified in the inspection regarding safeguarding**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The PRU has implemented a range of suitable measures to safeguard pupils. It now provides hot and cold lunches. This has reduced the need for pupils to leave the school site during lunchtime. At least one member of staff accompanies the few pupils that leave at lunchtime.

The PRU makes appropriate referrals to other agencies. It continues to work closely with the local police and relationships between the police and pupils have improved. Pupils receive valuable support on a regular basis from counselling services. They have good opportunities to discuss issues that concern them.

The PRU uses child exploitation and online protection resources appropriately and continues to develop pupil's knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues. The PRU has made pupils aware of the need for protecting their identities when using the internet.

All staff are now trained in line with the requirements of the local safeguarding board. There are sensible risk assessments in place for all pupils. However, these are not dated or signed and there is no input from pupils, parents or outside agencies.

Incidents of physical restraint are recorded in a bound book, with more detailed evidence stored electronically. However, there is no record of pupils' views or analysis of incidents.

Overall, the PRU has improved its practice in safeguarding pupils. However, a few areas still give cause for concern.

### **Recommendation 2: Establish an effective tracking system and ensure that all pupils improve their literacy and numeracy skills**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The PRU has an effective system to track the progress of pupils. Staff track pupils' progress against National Curriculum attainment targets and the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. They use this information well to identify specific gaps and

areas in need of improvement for individual pupils.

The PRU has strengthened its links with feeder schools and this has improved the transfer of information about pupils' standards. The PRU now works from accurate baseline data and this helps staff to plan appropriate literacy and numeracy interventions and measure pupils' progress.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the attendance of all pupils**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

The PRU has used a wide range of strategies to improve attendance. This includes restructuring the curriculum to provide suitable and motivating learning experiences for all pupils. The provision of hot and cold meals at lunchtime and a programme of appropriate activities also encourage pupils to stay on site and attend afternoon sessions.

The PRU has communicated appropriately with parents to raise their awareness about the importance of good attendance. The PRU collects data on pupils' attendance at their previous school. Many pupils demonstrate higher attendance levels at the PRU than they did at their mainstream school. The PRU liaises well with the educational welfare service to review and follow-up pupil absences.

However, as identified in previous monitoring visits, the PRU does not always assign the correct codes to explain pupil absence. The PRU continues to record pupils absent due to medical reasons as present. As a result, although records show an improvement in attendance, the continuing inaccuracies of the recording system undermine the validity of this data.

### **Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The new staff group works well together and are keen to keep improving. Teachers are managing their classrooms well. Both staff and pupils recognise that the PRU has become a positive working environment. As a result, pupils are engaging in their lessons and completing their work.

There has been significant investment into information and technology equipment since the inspection and staff have now received training to make best use of the equipment. This includes registration, recording behaviour and maintaining a school diary. The PRU has purchased 25 computer notebooks. This makes a major contribution to improving pupils' levels of engagement in lessons.

Staff make good use of a framework produced by the regional consortia to reflect on the quality of their teaching and plot their improvement on-line. There is now close monitoring of teaching and staff share their practice well and learn from each other. Where necessary, teachers receive additional timely support.

Each month a subject leader presents a report to the senior leadership team. This includes baseline and assessment data with forecast outcomes linked to qualifications regardless of the pupils' year group. As a result, the team can decide which pupils are underperforming and where interventions are necessary and offer suggestions for improvement. Detailed assessments and records enable teachers to plan more effectively to support pupil progress. Pupils receive regular oral and written feedback to help them to improve.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the quality of planning and ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The PRU provides a broad and balanced curriculum. All schemes of work are now complete and pay suitable attention to developing pupils' skills. The curriculum provides a wide range of suitable vocational opportunities. These include placements at local businesses, such as a garage, care home and animal sanctuary. Staff are flexible and provide catch up sessions for pupils who are out on work placements or training. Where pupils have a particular interest, staff make arrangements to give them one-to-one sessions for example, in childcare and GCSE RE short-course.

There is a consistent approach to planning with all staff using the agreed planning format. Staff adapt their planning appropriately to meet pupils' needs and interests. Pupils benefit from a wide range of differentiated activities. The improved links with staff from other schools have improved the continuity of curriculum planning and ensured a more cohesive approach to planning. The PRU's recent staff appointments have enriched the curriculum by extending the range of specialist provision available.

**Recommendation 6: Improve pupil behaviour and ensure that all staff manage behaviour consistently**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

All staff follow the PRU's clear policies and guidelines for managing pupils' behaviour. In daily briefing meetings, staff discuss and analyse pupils' behaviour and agree strategies to help pupils' to manage their emotions. Staff use these briefing well to share good practice and effective behaviour management strategies.

Most pupils have bought-in to the "points 2 success" system. They understand the consequences that their positive engagement in learning and behaviour has on the rewards available to them. All staff have raised their expectations in terms of pupil behaviour and all apply the positive behaviour reward system consistently. As a result, pupils' behaviour has improved.

Overall, there has been a significant reduction in the frequency of fixed term exclusions and number of days lost by pupils. The PRU uses its own system to track exclusions but does not yet undertake a full analysis of the length of exclusion and reasons.

**Recommendation 7: Ensure that all statutory and relevant non-statutory policies are in place**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The PRU has addressed this recommendation fully. All statutory and relevant non-statutory policies are now in place.

**Recommendation 8: Improve the process and quality of self-evaluation**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The PRU has produced a useful self-evaluation document and has put robust monitoring processes in place. A culture of self-evaluation is developing where staff routinely assess their own and their pupils' performance. Recently, the PRU used questionnaires to seek the views of pupils and parents. Although this consultation is not yet complete, responses so far are positive.

The headteacher works closely with the challenge adviser and has recently established effective links with other external bodies. These links provide a further level of scrutiny to enable the PRU to judge accurately its strengths and weaknesses. However, many of these processes are new and it is too early to measure their full impact and overall effectiveness.

**Recommendation 9: Ensure that the PRU, the management committee and the local authority work together effectively to raise standards**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The teacher-in-charge now provides a thorough report to the management committee. The report now includes more data in tabular form so that members can quickly see where there are areas that need to improve. The support and challenge of the management committee and the local authority have been significant in helping the PRU bring about important staff changes. The enthusiasm and expertise of new staff in providing pupils with stimulating learning activities is starting to have positive impact on pupil's standards, attendance and behaviour.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the PRU should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.