



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Brynlllywarch Hall School
Kerry
Nr Newtown
Powys
SY16 4PB**

Date of inspection: January 2018

by

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

About Brynllwarch Hall School

Brynllwarch Hall School is situated near Newtown and is maintained by Powys local authority. The school provides education for pupils from 8 to 19 years of age with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and additional learning needs.

At the time of the inspection, the school educated 55 pupils, 48 boys and seven girls. Of these, eight pupils are in key stage 2, 12 pupils are in key stage 3, 22 pupils are in key stage 4 and 13 are post-16 pupils.

Nearly all pupils come from Powys. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Around 29% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. English is the predominant language of all pupils.

The school is situated in a grade 2-listed building. Close to the main building, there is a music block with a recording studio, a construction workshop and a wellbeing centre. Within the 17-acre grounds there are two Forest Schools, a school farm for small animals and a range of play areas.

The school was last inspected in 2012. The headteacher has been in post since 2011. Other members of the senior management team have been in post for less than a year.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Over time, many pupils at Brynllwarch Hall School make suitable progress in their learning and improve their attendance and behaviour. However, a minority of pupils in key stages 3 and 4 do not make enough progress in managing their behaviour, and do not engage well in their learning.

Nearly all staff have very good working relationships with the pupils. They understand pupils' emotional needs well and respond sensitively when pupils are finding things difficult. The school provides learning experiences that meet the needs of learners at key stage 2 and post-16 well. However, the curriculum does not incorporate a sufficiently co-ordinated approach to the development of pupils' skills. There is a significant difference in the quality of teaching across the school. Overall, teaching is adequate and needs improvement..

The headteacher provides strong day-to-day operational leadership. However, the strategic role of the leadership team in improving pupils' standards, the quality of teaching and the provision for pupil wellbeing is under developed.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Adequate and needs improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Adequate and needs improvement
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate and needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement
Leadership and management	Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the quality of strategic leadership and procedures for school improvement planning
- R2 Improve the curriculum at key stages 3 and 4, to ensure that it matches more closely the needs, interests and aspirations of the pupils
- R3 Improve the quality of teaching
- R4 Improve pupil behaviour
- R5 Address the shortcomings in the management of health and safety procedures identified during the inspection

What happens next

Special measures

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress on a termly basis.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

During their time at the school, many pupils make suitable progress in relation to their individual needs and abilities due to the beneficial support and encouragement they receive from staff. However, this progress is not sustained consistently across all key stages of the school. In key stage 2 and at post-16, most pupils develop their learning and skills well. However, in key stage 3 and key stage 4, pupils' engagement varies too much across the curriculum. In a few subjects in particular, pupils do not engage positively with learning activities and they waste too much time. As a result, a minority of pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 do not make enough progress in their learning.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve at Brynllwarch Hall School with national averages or to analyse trends over time because of the wide range of pupils' educational and emotional needs. There is no notable difference between the performance of all pupils and that of boys and girls, pupils who receive free school meals or those who are in the care of their local authority.

Over time, many pupils make appropriate progress in developing their literacy skills in relation to their needs and abilities. In history, pupils skim and scan extended texts to identify and record accurately key information on social developments in Weimar Germany. These pupils use inference and deduction to evaluate successfully the reliability of historical sources. In key stage 2, pupils use their understanding of the features of narrative writing to create well-planned and entertaining short stories. In these lessons, many pupils improve their handwriting, make appropriate word choices and punctuate their work appropriately with capital letters and full stops. However, a few pupils across the school take little pride in the presentation of their written work. They provide only brief, undeveloped responses and struggle to complete work independently.

The majority of pupils develop sound numeracy skills. In mathematics, they apply their understanding of units of measurement, three-dimensional shapes and place value. In geography, they measure the temperature in different areas of the school and record this information accurately in the form of bar graphs. At post-16, pupils apply their numeracy skills in practical contexts, for example when calculating ratios to mix fuel, or when calculating the areas of walls for painting and decorating. However, a minority of pupils across the school lack confidence in applying their numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Many pupils make effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning. For example, pupils use appropriate software to create useful presentations on forces in science or to convert data into pie charts and tables.

Across the school, many pupils participate in a variety of valuable outdoor activities such as mountain biking, caving and rugby. This helps to build their confidence and develop valuable teamwork and physical skills. A minority of pupils develop useful social skills and self-esteem through their participation in work experience placements and volunteering projects in their community.

The majority of pupils continue into post-16 education at the school. Over the last three years, most pupils have moved on to suitable further education and specialist college provision or employment. Nearly all pupils leave the school with at least one nationally recognised qualification in courses that are generally well matched to their needs and abilities. These include qualifications in a suitable range of work-related courses, including construction, land-based studies and animal care. However, in a few cases, qualifications are not matched closely enough to pupils' future needs or likely destinations.

Many pupils develop a suitable understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales. However, overall, pupils do not develop their Welsh language skills well enough.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Adequate and needs improvement

Pupils who attend Brynllwarch Hall School have a wide range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Most pupils arrive at the school with a history of poor attendance, little confidence as learners and difficulties in managing their behaviour. Over time, many pupils develop the skills they need to manage their behaviour well. These pupils build strong, trusting relationships with staff. They develop the confidence and skills they need to work with increasing independence, are punctual to lessons and engage well with their learning.

The majority of pupils across the school are courteous and polite to each other and co-operate well in paired and small group activities. In music, for example, pupils learn about the importance of teamwork through evaluating the contributions that they and others make to ensemble work. In physical education, pupils encourage each other to improve personal performance in fitness challenges.

However, a minority of pupils do not always co-operate well with others. They do not listen well in group discussions and use inappropriate language to others both in class and around the school. A few pupils, particularly in key stages 3 and 4, do not respond well to the school's approach to behaviour management and staff support. They take little pride in their work and do not complete tasks to the best of their ability. A few pupils do not remain in class for the duration of the lesson. As a result, they make slow progress with their own learning and their behaviour disrupts the learning of others.

Many pupils with a poor record of attendance from their previous school make strong progress improving their attendance. However, the persistent absence of a few pupils has a negative impact on their standards and wellbeing. Overall, attendance at the school is too low.

Most pupils feel safe in school, and know that staff will support them well when they feel worried. A few pupils, who are anxious, make appropriate use of the wellbeing centre and time out rooms to help them manage the routines of the school day. Most pupils are confident that the school deals well with any incidents of bullying.

A few pupils have leadership responsibilities within the school such as sitting on the school council, acting as classroom monitors in key stage 2 or promoting the work of the school's eco committee. Older pupils, develop leadership skills through taking part in worthwhile enterprise projects and the sports leadership course. A few pupils

benefit highly from coaching rugby to pupils at schools in the local community and playing for regional teams. Pupils enjoy being involved in decision-making and make worthwhile contributions to the whole school assembly.

Most pupils understand the importance of having a healthy diet and the need to take regular exercise. They make beneficial food and drink choices at lunchtimes. Many pupils engage well in a wide range of physical activities with enjoyment and enthusiasm, such as cycling and canoeing

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

There is a significant difference in the quality of teaching across the school. Overall, teaching is adequate and needs improvement.

Nearly all staff have very good working relationships with the pupils. They understand pupils' emotional needs well, and respond sensitively when pupils are finding things difficult. Nearly all staff provide regular praise and encouragement. This helps the majority of pupils to remain engaged and on task.

In a majority of lessons, there is good pace. This ensures that pupils remain motivated and interested in their learning. However, in a minority of lessons, the pace of learning is too slow and pupils do not make sufficient progress. In a minority of lessons, activities are not matched well enough to individual pupils' needs and abilities and do not motivate pupils well enough. Lessons do not consistently provide enough challenge for all pupils.

Many teachers plan lessons carefully. Schemes of work are generally detailed and lessons have clear learning objectives, which they reinforce regularly. However, in a few lessons, staff provide too much support for pupils, and do not give them enough opportunities to work independently. In a minority of lessons, there is an over reliance on worksheets. This limits pupils' ability to develop their extended writing skills.

Nearly all staff provide helpful verbal feedback. In a majority of subjects, written feedback helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.

At key stage 2 and post-16, the curriculum generally meets the needs of most learners. At post-16, a range of interesting practical and vocational options keeps pupils engaged and prepares them well for future life. At key stage 2, teachers plan motivating topics such as myths and legends and Africa. At key stage 4, vocational options such as construction, animal studies, and home cooking enable pupils to develop valuable skills. However, a few of the courses offered at key stage 4 do not meet the needs of all pupils well enough and do not help them develop the skills they need for future life.

The school provides a wide range of valuable opportunities for outdoor learning, including hill walking, climbing and sailing. These activities help pupils to develop confidence, self-esteem and teamwork. The school's animal farm enables pupils to develop important skills such as taking responsibility. Other worthwhile learning experiences include visits to places of interest such as football and rugby stadia, the zoo, and a fundraising event for Children in Need. The school organises relevant work experience for a few of the older pupils.

In many lessons, there are useful planned opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Through whole-school training, staff are gradually becoming more aware of how they develop these skills across the curriculum. However, the development of wider skills such as thinking skills, problem-solving skills, independence skills, social skills and life skills is not co-ordinated well enough across the school.

The school carries out relevant assessments of pupils' reading and spelling ability, and more recently their numeracy skills. Staff use this information well to identify which pupils require intervention programmes.

Care, support and guidance: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

The school promotes positive attitudes towards healthy eating and physical exercise well. This includes providing many opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of off-site sporting challenges such as canoeing, swimming and cycling. However, the lack of a suitable indoor facility limits the range of sporting activities that pupils can engage in on site.

The provision at the school's wellbeing centre and nurture rooms provide effective support for pupils who are anxious or need a calm environment. The school has formed a few strategic partnerships with external agencies that provide beneficial support for pupils' social and emotional needs. These include access to counselling and a small range of therapies. However, the provision to support the learning needs of a few pupils such as those with specific learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders is underdeveloped.

The school's personal and social education programme provides pupils with useful information on an appropriate range of relevant and important issues such as healthy relationships education, substance misuse and online safety.

There is appropriate provision for older pupils to develop work related skills, such as how to use garden machinery safely and skills for household maintenance.

Following consultation with staff and pupils, senior leaders have revised the school's approach to behaviour management and have introduced new rewards for pupils who meet work targets and behaviour expectations. However, the system is newly in place and staff do not implement the system consistently across all classes. In a few cases, staff give pupils rewards without them meeting the expected standard of behaviour and work. Staff are also inconsistent in applying the school's restorative approach to resolving conflict.

The school has developed a useful system to gather information on important aspects of pupil wellbeing such as attendance, serious incidents and the use of withdrawal and time out. Senior leaders use this information well to track trends in pupil behaviour and engagement in learning. However, staff do not use this information well enough when setting targets for pupils in these important aspects of pupil wellbeing. As a result, targets in individual education plans (IEPs) and individual behaviour plans (IBPs) for aspects of wellbeing are too general and do not relate closely enough to the specific social, emotional and behavioural needs of individual pupils. The school's procedures for improving pupil attendance are not effective in tackling the persistent absence of a few pupils.

The school's system for tracking pupils' progress in important skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT requires improvement. Generally, targets in IEPs do not link closely enough to the specific needs of pupils. IEPs do not provide staff and pupils with the information they need to build progressively on these skills. The provision of interventions to improve pupils' skills do not link well enough to the identified needs of a few pupils.

Staff provide parents with useful information on their child's behaviour and progress through regular telephone contact. The school provides parents with a detailed annual report on pupil progress that includes useful information on their child's achievements in each subject area.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. However, the inspection team brought a few issues relating to the management of health and safety procedures to the attention of the governors.

Leadership and management: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

The headteacher provides strong day-to-day operational leadership and is an effective point of contact for staff and pupils. Leaders have established suitable aims for developing the school as a place that provides a fresh start for pupils and equips them with skills to take their place in society. The school's success in achieving these aims is variable. Overall, the quality of school leadership supports most pupils in key stage 2 and in the post-16 department to make suitable progress and achieve appropriate standards. However, leaders do not have enough impact on supporting pupils in other school departments to do as well as they could. For example, the formal secondary school approach to teaching individual subjects leads to regular and notable losses of learning time, due to frequent movement from one classroom to another.

The school has recently established a new leadership team. This structure provides valuable opportunities for staff to take on additional responsibilities. In a few instances, these new roles are working well. Leaders with responsibility for literacy and developing pupils' digital skills have secured improvements to provision and standards in key stage 2 and in humanities work across the school. There is a lack of clarity in relation to leading numeracy across the school. As a result, the planning for this provision is underdeveloped and the standards of pupils' numeracy across the school are lower than their literacy skills

Generally, leaders, in senior roles have a suitable understanding of their designated responsibilities. A few provide effective leadership to departments. However, on too many occasions, senior staff spend too much time reacting to problems, for example dealing with pupils' poor behaviour. Their strategic role in improving standards of provision, learning and wellbeing is in the early stages of development.

School leaders undertake a suitable range of self-evaluation activities. As a result, they identify a few of the school's strengths and areas for development accurately. For example, they know where the most effective teaching takes place. Leaders observe lessons and scrutinise pupils' work regularly. They produce reports about the school's work within their area of responsibility. However, these reports do not always evaluate well enough the impact of provision on the progress pupils make or the standards they achieve. For example, leaders regularly identify that all teachers mark pupils' work but do not evaluate the effect that teachers' marking has on pupils' learning.

The school collects considerable amounts of data about different aspects of pupils' progress and performance. However, leaders do not make effective use of this information. For example, school leaders gather data that shows improvement in pupils' reading and spelling but do not identify why these pupils make strong progress. This limits the school's capacity to share effective practice. Leaders' evaluation of data in relation to pupils' behaviour has a variable impact. In a few instances, leaders are beginning to use this information to plan appropriate interventions. However, leaders do not evaluate the impact of whole school approaches, such as the use of time out and withdrawal, on improving pupils' behaviour.

Weaknesses in the self-evaluation and improvement planning processes mean that the school has not addressed important shortcomings, such as pupils' behaviour, the variability in the quality of teaching and curriculum provision.

Leaders are beginning to establish a culture of sharing practice, for example by facilitating joint planning at key stage 2. They make appropriate arrangements for staff training linked to school improvement goals, for example through sessions to develop staff's digital skills and by offering leadership training for those new to leadership roles. However, the school does not provide staff with enough opportunities to develop their professional practice by working with other schools. There are suitable performance management arrangements for all staff.

Leaders react positively to pupils' emotional needs, for example by adapting rooms in the building so that pupils can have a place to go when they are experiencing difficult times. However, the overall maintenance, condition and layout of the school's buildings are unsatisfactory. The school makes effective use of the outdoor environment, for example to develop older pupils' ground management skills.

The governors undertake most responsibilities appropriately. They visit the school regularly and receive valuable updates from the headteacher and other school leaders about developments. They provide suitable levels of challenge to the headteacher, for example when developing the new staffing structure. However, recently, neither governors nor senior leaders have monitored finances robustly enough. The school is currently in a deficit budget situation. There are suitable and approved plans to address the situation. The school uses additional funding such as the pupil development grant for a suitable range of purposes.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

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Publication date: 26/03/2018