



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

**A report on
Teresa House**

Date of inspection: March 2020

by

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

About Teresa House

Teresa House is an independent special school situated in a rural setting on the north Wales coast. The school provides education, care and therapy for pupils aged 11 to 18 years. It is owned by Care4Children, a specialist children's services agency that has ten independent special schools across England and Wales.

Pupils who attend Teresa House are all residents in the linked children's home that shares the site.

The headteacher has been in post since the school was established in 2015. The headteacher also has a teaching role and is supported by a small number of tutors at the school.

The school's last annual monitoring visit was in November 2018. This is the first core inspection of the school.

As there are fewer than five pupils at the school, inspectors did not give a judgement for standards or wellbeing and attitudes to learning. This is because the number of pupils was too few to report on without identifying individual pupils.

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

The school provides a very high quality of education and care, support and guidance for pupils. These aspects make a significant and positive impact on the progress pupils make in their attendance and learning during their time at the school.

The school provides a relevant, broad and balanced curriculum, which allows pupils to develop beneficial skills in all aspects of their learning. Pupils have access to a wide range of learning opportunities and qualification pathways that ensure that, when they leave the school, they progress successfully to further education, training, or employment.

The school provides an exceptionally nurturing and positive ethos, where pupils improve their self-confidence, self-knowledge, and self-esteem significantly. The close working relationship between the education staff, care staff, and the clinical therapy team supports strongly all aspects of pupils' development. The headteacher provides highly effective leadership at the school. All staff reinforce consistently the school's clear vision and aims. As a result, the school provides all pupils with highly beneficial learning opportunities.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	No judgement made
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	No judgement made
Teaching and learning experiences	Excellent
Care, support and guidance	Excellent
Leadership and management	Excellent

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 2003. 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 meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The provision of information

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Recommendations

R1 Review the frequency and requirements of headteacher written reports to the company to ensure that these arrangements are proportionate

R2 Improve accommodation to ensure that pupils have access to a quiet study area

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.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the joint working between the onsite multi-disciplinary team and school staff and the development of the personal and social education curriculum delivered across the school, for dissemination on Estyn's website

Main findings

Standards: No judgement made

Inspectors did not make a judgement for standards.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: No judgement made

Inspectors did not make a judgement for standards.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

The school has planned the curriculum extremely well to provide pupils with extensive learning experiences. These include valuable opportunities for pupils to personalise their learning through access to off-site college courses and online training in area such as nails, hair, and beauty. These opportunities meet pupils' individual needs and interests well and contribute positively to stimulating their enthusiasm for learning.

Pupils have worthwhile options to take part in work-related learning, through placements at a riding centre, animal sanctuary, and local charity shops. This beneficial provision enables them to develop their social skills and strengthens their understanding of the world of work. This significantly supports their reintegration into the community and strongly promotes their understanding of how to keep themselves safe at all times.

Teaching staff use information from initial assessments thoroughly to ensure pupils have opportunities to take qualifications at a relevant level. These include a wide range of awarding bodies and levels from entry level to GCSE in a broad range of subjects, including mathematics, English, and science. The school enhances their own qualification offer through effective partnerships with other providers including, for example, land-based studies at the local further education college.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their skills at an appropriate level across all subjects and in specific literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers ensure that pupils are taught the basic formal literacy and numeracy skills such as spelling, punctuation, number, measure, shape, and space before enhancing these through practical application. For example, in numeracy, teachers develop pupils' skills in addition and subtraction and then consolidate these through practical sessions utilising money through role-play scenarios.

Teachers promote the Welsh language very effectively and naturally throughout all lessons. As a result, all pupils are confident in their use of basic Welsh key words such as days of the week, greetings and colours.

Teaching staff plan lessons extremely well based on a thorough understanding of the needs of each individual pupil. They ensure that learning objectives for the day are shared clearly with each pupil. This enables pupils to understand their aims for the day and promotes high levels of motivation.

Teaching staff have outstanding working relationships with pupils. They adapt lessons skilfully to respond to the needs of individual pupils and to ensure that they achieve to the best of their ability. Pupils have access to a wide and motivational range of resources and this supports their engagement well. These include online activities, games, puzzles, and interactive resources.

Teaching staff utilise questioning strategies very effectively to encourage pupils to develop their thinking skills and to provide opportunities for pupils to recall prior learning. Where appropriate, they use extended questions extremely well to encourage pupils to express opinions and develop a more in-depth understanding of ideas and topics. All teachers use their thorough understanding of the needs and abilities of the pupils to direct questions of varying complexity to individuals to provide appropriate challenge.

Teachers provide pupils with motivational positive feedback and encouragement. As a result, pupils take pride in their work and are eager to share this with peers, education and care staff. Teachers are very sensitive to pupils' emotional needs and, as a result, written feedback is tailored to best suit each individual pupil. For example, where appropriate, instead of writing directly on pupils' work, teachers write constructive comments on adhesive notes to reduce anxieties pupils may experience.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school provides an extremely caring and supportive environment where pupils feel they are accepted for who they are and without judgement. This highly nurturing and inclusive ethos drives exceptional levels of attendance and achieves very positive outcomes for the pupils.

The very close working partnership between the clinical therapy team, teaching staff and the care team is extremely successful in helping staff to understand how best to support pupils' wellbeing. This partnership promotes a three-stage wellbeing model very effectively. The first stage of this model ensures that pupils are safe and secure, before later stages help them to address issues from earlier in their lives and move forward towards a positive future. The model is fully integrated within the school's personal, social and emotional (PSE) programme. This means that pupils are supported very effectively and consistently between the education staff, the care team and the school psychologist. As a result, pupils make exceptional progress in improving their self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence.

The PSE programme is a very strong feature of the school and aspects of the programme are co-ordinated carefully across all subjects as well as taught through specific lessons. The school plans topics sensitively and thoughtfully to allow all pupils to interact with the information in a way that best suits them. Topics are made easily accessible and are re-visited as necessary to support the pupils best. These topics include healthy relationships, drugs and alcohol awareness and how to be active and ethical citizens.

The school plans well for pupils to learn how to achieve a healthy lifestyle. This means that pupils develop a secure understanding of the importance of healthy

eating and regular exercise. For example, pupils engage enthusiastically in activities such as rib riding and paddle boarding.

Where appropriate, the school enables pupils to engage with the local community through activities such as working with the local Brownies unit and helping at a local animal charity sanctuary. This contributes well to their improving sense of self-worth and self-confidence.

The school works strategically to identify pupils' likely destinations beyond school. As part of this process, they arrange for pupils to meet with the careers service and provide pupils with relevant advice and guidance to enable them to make informed choices when they leave the school. These choices include successful progression to further education, apprenticeships, or employment.

The school promotes very well a good understanding of the culture of Wales and other countries. As a result, pupils learn very effectively about respect, tolerance, and equality.

The school carries out a wide variety of assessments for all pupils and uses these skilfully to set targets and plan for relevant steps of support. Education staff work very well in partnership with online teachers, psychologists, and social workers to produce informative personal education plans (PEPs). These plans include the pupils' long-term aspirations, anticipated or desired destinations beyond school, additional support needs, and emotional health and wellbeing targets. The school enables all pupils to contribute to these plans and this helps to ensure they are relevant to the needs of the individual pupil.

The school reviews, monitors and tracks pupils' progress against these PEP targets thoroughly and with the individual pupil. The school gathers the resulting data from PEP reviews very well to analyse outcomes, improve support for pupils and identify the strengths and areas for development within the provision.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The headteacher provides exceptionally strong leadership. She leads by example, placing the needs of all pupils at the centre of the work of the school. The headteacher has extremely high expectations for both staff and pupils and reinforces consistently the school's vision and aims in her role as both headteacher and class teacher. All staff share and promote the school vision and aims consistently well. They provide very strong role models for pupils on a daily basis. All staff know the needs of the pupils exceptionally well and provide outstanding levels of commitment.

The headteacher has developed a secure and relevant curriculum offer for all pupils. The highly successful working relationship between the clinical therapy team, care and school staff strengthens curriculum provision significantly. Valuable monthly multi-disciplinary team meetings led by senior leaders across care, education and clinical psychology provide beneficial opportunities to share information successfully and quality assure the progress pupils make during their time at the school.

The headteacher has established extremely efficient processes to support and challenge all staff at the school. These include daily monitoring of lessons, weekly

meetings, and monthly supervision activities. As a result, there is a high degree of communication and consistency between staff delivering specific aspects of the curriculum across the school week. Consequently, all pupils respond very positively to their individual learning plans and targets for improvement and make outstanding progress at the school.

The headteacher has a thorough, accurate and realistic understanding of the strengths and areas for development at the school. She has been quick to implement all recommendations from all annual monitoring visits over the last five years. This has resulted in consistent and sustained improvement.

There is a robust and well-established process of school self-evaluation, which leads to relevant priorities for improvement. Staff are involved fully in the self-evaluation process and through their day-to-day work contribute helpfully to achieving the school improvement targets. Financial planning by the headteacher is accurate with clear links to the school's priorities for improvement.

There are extensive reporting systems in place by the headteacher to the head of education for the company and to all relevant agencies involved with each pupil. However, in a few instances, the required frequency and duplication of these reports impacts unhelpfully on the headteacher's role as class teacher.

Frequent supervision sessions ensure that staff identify useful professional development needs. Overall, internal training opportunities meet these needs successfully. For example, the clinical psychologist provides training on the use of cognitive assessment information to inform teachers' lesson planning. However, opportunities for staff to visit similar provisions are at an early stage of development.

The classroom area is well resourced and provides pupils opportunities to work in groups and individually. However, the school lacks a quiet room or additional teaching area and this means that reviews with pupils are not consistently taking place in an appropriate area.

The company's head of education provides a valuable supportive role and has an extremely good understanding of the school. Her weekly visits to the school provide the headteacher with beneficial opportunities to reflect on pupil progress and strongly support the quality assurance processes and structures across the school.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

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

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- meet proprietors, school leaders and individual members of teaching and support staff 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
- visit lessons and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings
- 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, information on pupils' wellbeing, 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

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 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003. 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:

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Publication date: 14/05/2020