



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

A report on

Gorwelion Newydd / New Horizons

**82 Rhosddu Road
Wrexham
LL11 2NP**

Date of inspection: February 2024

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

This inspection was undertaken as part of pilot inspection arrangements. As a result, this report may be slightly different in format to other published reports for providers in the sector.

About Gorwelion Newydd/ New Horizons

Name of provider	Gorwelion Newydd / New Horizons
Local authority	Wrexham County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Multi-site provision	Yes
Number of pupils on roll	61
Pupils of statutory school age	61
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	1 May 2016
Start date of inspection	26 February 2024

Gorwelion Newydd is a portfolio pupil referral unit (PRU). The service operates as a single integrated provision with one management committee and one headteacher.

Stiwdio Hafod is a short stay, de-escalation Key Stage 3 provision for pupils with social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties. The focus is on a return to mainstream schools for these pupils where appropriate. Currently there are 10 pupils on roll. Stiwdio Pen-y-Cae is a Key Stage 4 provision for pupils with social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties and has 28 pupils on roll. Haulfan is a secondary phase provision for pupils with emotionally based school avoidance with 23 pupils currently on roll. Pupil numbers on roll at the PRU have slightly increased over the last three years.

Over the last three years the numbers of pupils who are dual registered at the PRU has increased. Currently 40 of the 61 pupils are dual registered. The three year average for pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) is currently at 60%, which is a marked increase and above the Wales rolling average of 45.5% across all schools. Currently 48% of the cohort are eligible for free school meals. Attendance of pupils is 71%. In the last academic year, 10 pupils have returned to either mainstream schools or to special school placements. There are no pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL). A very few pupils are children looked after (CLA). A very few pupils are known to be young carers at the PRU.

There are 47 pupils who are at school action plus, five pupils have a statement of special educational need (SEN), nine pupils have an individual development plan (IDP) maintained by the PRU and there are no local authority maintained IDPs.

The last inspection was in May 2016 where the PRU was placed in significant improvement. It was removed from significant improvement in September 2017. The headteacher has been in post since 2014.

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Summary

Gorwelion Newydd pupil referral unit (PRU) provides a calm, nurturing and purposeful environment, which supports pupils' well-being and learning strongly. Staff are highly effective role models and foster successful working relationships with pupils, which are based on trust and mutual respect. As a result, most pupils make strong progress during their time at the PRU and achieve standards in line with their expectations. A few pupils make exceptional progress.

Leaders and staff articulate a clear vision for teaching and learning. They work diligently to develop and adapt the curriculum offer across the three sites. They communicate high expectations and are aspirational for pupils. The curriculum is broad, balanced, and purposeful, with a clear rationale, offering a range of beneficial experiences in authentic contexts. As a result, pupils are motivated to learn and have strong positive attitudes to learning and attendance.

There is a comprehensive curriculum offer for older pupils, which prepares them well for their possible future pathways. This includes a range of courses, including GCSEs, entry level and vocational pathways. A wide range of private providers, co-ordinated by the lead for education other than at school (EOTAS), extends and strengthens the offer further for pupils. As a result, when they leave, many pupils move on to purposeful education, employment, or training.

Staff know pupils extremely well. They have a flexible approach and adapt learning experiences well in response to the needs, behaviour, and well-being of pupils. Strategies to manage behaviour are consistent, with pupils having clear expectations and boundaries in place. As a result, pupil behaviour is very good.

Attendance processes are highly effective across the PRU. Processes and systems are well established and, as a result, many pupils make strong progress in their personal attendance rates from their initial starting points.

Each site has a school council that meet regularly. Members take great pride in their work and play a valuable part in the life of the PRU. Members speak positively about the positive impact on their confidence and their genuine pride in being part of Wrexham community at the PRU. They identify changes that have been made at their sites because of issues they have raised, such as the introduction of curriculum options and the redecoration of areas of the PRU.

The curriculum is a valuable vehicle used effectively to promote pupils' awareness of keeping themselves safe and develop their understanding of their rights. Leaders and staff, together with the management committee, have robust processes in place to safeguard pupils. These are well established and are a strong feature of the PRU.

The headteacher and senior leaders have created a highly effective culture of collaborative and transparent working arrangements with key partners. The communication and working relationship with parents and carers are strong. As a result, strategic leadership of the PRU is a strength.

Recommendations

We have made 2 recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Improve pupils' digital skills
- R2 Strengthen the collaborative working arrangements with mainstream schools to secure successful return to mainstream education for pupils where appropriate

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main evaluation

Pupil progress

Gorwelion Newydd pupil referral unit (PRU) provides a calm, nurturing and purposeful environment, which supports pupils' well-being and learning strongly. Staff are highly effective role models and foster successful working relationships with pupils, which are based on trust and mutual respect. As a result, most pupils make sound progress during their time at the PRU and achieve the standards in line with their expectations. A few pupils make exceptional progress.

Leaders have a clear vision in place which underpins the work of the PRU, 'opportunity, aspiration, success'. This is understood by staff, pupils, the management committee and parents well. Leaders have effectively developed a strong culture of high expectations for all pupils. A 'fresh start' approach is evident in all lessons, through interactions between staff and pupils, and is effectively communicated to parents. As a result, most pupils make significant progress in their behaviour, and attendance during their time at the PRU. Pupils show resilience when faced with challenges and have a positive perception of themselves as learners. This demonstrates very strong progress from their starting points.

Leaders and staff articulate a clear vision for teaching and learning. They work diligently to develop and adapt the curriculum offer across the three sites. They communicate high expectations and are aspirational for pupils. The curriculum is broad, balanced, and purposeful, with a clear rationale, offering a range of beneficial experiences in authentic contexts. As a result, pupils are motivated to learn and have strong positive attitudes to learning and attendance.

There is a clear focus on developing pupils social and life skills. Leaders have carefully designed a curriculum to meet the needs of pupils at the PRU, built around keeping pupils safe, and developing their understanding of being healthy and how to

develop their well-being. The curriculum is underpinned by the key principles of 'Safety, skills and sustainability', which aims to encourage pupils to be resilient and prepare them for their next steps in life. As a result, most pupils are developing into ambitious, respectful individuals who are aspirational about their future.

Nearly all teachers ensure that learning activities build effectively on pupils' prior learning, are well planned, and tailored to meet the needs and interests of individual pupils effectively. In addition, opportunities for pupils to direct their own learning are developing well. For example, teachers across the PRU provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to plan topics and activities that interest them. As a result, most pupils engage well with their learning, take pride in their work, and develop into confident learners.

Nearly all teachers ensure that learning is purposeful and that lessons have clear learning intentions that begin with engaging contexts and build skills successfully over time. They use a range of effective questioning techniques to support and develop pupils' learning and provide appropriate response times to allow pupils time to recall and organise their thinking. Teachers generally provide good levels of challenge, for example through asking questions, which deepen and extend pupils' learning. As a result, many pupils develop effective thinking skills and resilience, and make strong progress in lessons.

The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) at the PRU is an experienced and knowledgeable senior leader who is supported well by an assistant ALNCo. They work together skilfully to secure an exemplary culture of pupil-centred practice that is shared and understood by staff. The ALNCo and pastoral managers have extensive understanding of strategies to support the full range of complex needs of pupils. They work extremely effectively with a range of external agencies to develop a wide bank of resources and strategies for all staff to use. As a result, there is strong, joined-up provision across the PRU sites.

There are robust tracking systems to monitor and evaluate pupil progress. The PRU produces a detailed baseline of pupil attainment and well-being on entry. Staff use this information effectively to develop 'pupil passports' (one-page profiles) and individualised learning plans, and to set bespoke small-step targets for literacy, numeracy, well-being, social skills, and behaviour. As a result, staff know pupils very well and ensure that learning is highly personalised to their needs.

Most teachers gauge pupils' understanding through careful monitoring of pupils' learning and behaviour. Staff provide useful feedback to pupils and offer regular opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning, where appropriate. Teachers analyse the outcomes of their assessments of pupils to inform their future planning of lessons and the pupils' next steps in learning robustly.

Most pupils develop and apply their literacy and numeracy skills well during their time at the PRU.

Cameo – Literacy and numeracy development

Many pupils use their oracy skills well to respond to questions or to explain their learning. Pupils are confident when meeting visitors. They articulate their thoughts

about their ambitions and future pathways well. Individual pupils read well in their activities across the curriculum. For example, they show good comprehension skills to interpret the meaning of texts and identify key vocabulary. Pupils develop good writing skills and improve their spelling and grammar skills during their time at the PRU. Pupils develop their skills to write at length well. Individual pupils make strong progress in developing mathematics skills. They work well with basic number and present and evaluate data confidently. Older pupils develop their understanding of algebra well and a few solve simultaneous equations successfully.

Provision for pupils to develop their understanding of Welsh is developing well. The provision to develop pupils' digital skills progressively across the curriculum are under developed. With support, pupils are developing their skills well to work confidently independently, in small groups and in teams. During their time at the PRU, and as their confidence grows, pupils begin to engage with new, unfamiliar experiences well. Pupils have worthwhile opportunities to participate in physical activity and a range of local facilities are effectively used, including ice-skating, football, cycling and bowling.

There is a comprehensive curriculum offer for older pupils, which prepares them well for their possible future pathways. This includes a range of courses, including GCSEs, entry level and vocational pathways. A wide network of private providers, co-ordinated by the lead for education other than at school (EOTAS), extends and strengthens the offer further for pupils. As a result, when they leave, many pupils move on to purposeful education, employment or training.

Pupil behaviour and well-being

Staff know pupils extremely well. They have a flexible approach and adapt learning experiences well in response to the needs, behaviour and well-being of pupils. Strategies to manage behaviour are consistent with pupils having clear expectations and boundaries in place. As a result, pupil behaviour is very good. When pupils exhibit high levels of anxiety or become dysregulated, staff skilfully manage these incidents calmly and consistently. As a result, pupils return to learning quickly.

A pupil voice driven rewards system contributes successfully to a calm and purposeful atmosphere across the PRU. Pupils speak very positively about how the recognition and rewards they can work towards are a significant incentive to strive for positive behaviour, for example phone calls home and certificates, and trips to local venues. As a result, pupils, relative to their needs and abilities, exhibit exemplary behaviour around the PRU, and in lessons they settle promptly to learning. They are courteous, show age-appropriate social communication skills and show respect for their peers and adults. This is a strength of the PRU.

Processes to monitor attendance are highly effective across the PRU. These processes are well established and as a result many pupils make strong progress in their personal attendance rates from their initial starting points. Pastoral support plans (PSPs) are in place and provide clear steps to support pupils return to full time education in a timely manner. They are regularly reviewed by leaders to evaluate pupil progress and to identify additional support where required.

Rates of exclusion have reduced by over 80% in the last two years. Leaders track and evaluate reasons for exclusions and put into place robust plans to address cohort specific challenges. Rates of restrictive physical interventions are very low, having declined significantly in recent years. Currently no pupils meet the criteria to require a positive handling plan. These improvements are as a result of pupils' motivation to learn and access to curriculum opportunities, which meet their needs well.

The reintegration of pupils into mainstream settings is a high priority in the short-stay provision. The development of 'Golden Passports' and 'Return to School' folders are a strong feature, focusing everyone on the individual needs of the pupil. For example, in the past two years around a half of pupils in the short stay provision have been supported to reintegrate into mainstream settings or independent special schools. Analysis of pupils' success upon reintegration is at an early stage of development.

Leaders have introduced a highly creative range of useful resources and interventions to support pupils' well-being, for example bespoke social skills games and animal therapy. The strategic appointment of pastoral managers and well-being assistants supports pupils well to overcome barriers to learning and to re-engage with education. Given pupils' prior educational experiences, many pupils now display outstanding resilience in their learning. This is a strength.

Each site has a school council that meet regularly. Members take great pride in their work and play a valuable part in the life of the PRU. Members speak positively about the positive impact on their confidence and their genuine pride in being part of Wrexham community at the PRU. They identify changes that have been made at their sites because of issues they have raised, such as the introduction of curriculum options and the redecoration of areas of the PRU.

Many pupils engage well with a range of lunchtime clubs, including fantasy strategy games and music, and with an after-school gaming club once a week. These clubs skilfully encourage pupils to socialise and help break down barriers in a discrete way, helping foster a greater sense of community.

Leadership

Led by the headteacher, staff at Gorwelion Newydd are highly reflective practitioners. Staff are a cohesive team and working relationships amongst them are exemplary. These highly effective values impact significantly on the exceptionally strong working relationships between staff and pupils. Consequently, pupils feel highly valued and develop a strong sense of belonging, and nearly all thrive during their time at the PRU.

Leaders are robust in their roles and responsibilities making strategic decisions for improvement based on an effective range of well-established quality assurance processes. Staff are fully involved in these processes and, as a result, feel highly valued by leaders and are strongly committed to meeting the identified priorities for improvement at the PRU.

Leaders and staff effectively promote pupils' awareness of keeping themselves safe and developing their understanding of their rights. Leaders and staff together with the

management committee have robust processes in place to safeguard pupils. These are well established and a strong feature of the PRU. Leaders promote strategies to address the poverty agenda sensitively and creatively. The strong pupil centred approach effectively focuses on equity of curriculum experiences for all pupils well.

The management committee is highly effective and undertakes its roles and responsibilities diligently. Processes and quality assurance systems for the management committee are robust. The highly effective and collaborative working relationship with the local authority fully supports improvements at the PRU. Leaders work well with key officers to develop provision through an ongoing process of collaboration. For example, improvements have been made to learning environments across the sites since the last inspection and the planned new builds show an additional financial commitment to improve facilities for pupils.

The working relationship with the school improvement partner is strong. The ongoing support for curriculum development and professional learning opportunities underpins the school development priorities well. The communication and working relationship with parents and carers are strong. The headteacher and senior leaders have created a highly effective culture of collaborative and transparent working arrangements with key partners. As a result, strategic leadership of the PRU is a strength.

Leaders have appointed key strategic staff across the provision. For example, pastoral managers at each site significantly strengthen the working relationships with parents to support their child. As a result, most pupils make strong progress in learning, behaviour and attendance. The innovative approach to the curriculum offer at the PRU is significantly strengthened through the EOTAS offer.

Cameo – strategic staff appointments

The role of the lead for EOTAS based at the PRU is a key strategic development allowing a wider breadth of opportunities for older pupils. Access to external providers supports pupils well to re-engage positively in the community. Learning and skill development is well planned through the small step approach in all targeted off-site provision. Providers offer for example, work experience in areas such as sound production. As a result, there is an integrated and cohesive approach to the curriculum offer for older pupils. In addition, this supports a PRU improvement priority well to support pupils to gain valuable experiences, which improve their employability skills for future destinations.

Leaders have created a strong culture of continued professional learning for all staff. As a result, they have developed a highly skilled workforce with the skills to support pupils highly effectively. Leaders deploy staff efficiently. There is a sensitive balance between support for pupils and robust development of pupils' independence skills. As a result, many pupils are resilient in their learning and challenge themselves to improve. This is a strength of the PRU.

Leaders have robust financial arrangements in place. Expenditure is clearly linked to priorities for improvement. In addition, leaders use funding innovatively, for example

the development of an after-school gaming club making sound use of the exceptionally high quality digital media centre.

Additional items

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

The PRU has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking

Leaders and the management committee manage the PRU's finances appropriately, including use of the pupil development grant

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the management committee through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the PRU and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, management committee, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the PRU's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their PRU
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the PRU council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the PRU's self-evaluation processes
- consider the PRU's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of PRU documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the management committee, 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 PRU and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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