



Report summary for parents and carers on ACT Schools

Date of inspection: March 2024

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

Overview

Most pupils at ACT schools have experienced significant periods of disruption to their education. They benefit from the nurturing and inclusive ethos at the school. Staff know their pupils well and generally adapt approaches to meet their emotional and well-being needs successfully. As a result, during their time at the school, the majority of pupils make suitable progress from their initial starting points in areas that support their personal development and learning. However, attendance issues impact on the rate of progress of a minority of pupils across the school.

Overall, many pupils behave suitably in lessons. However, on occasions, the behaviour of a few pupils disrupts the learning and well-being of other pupils.

Overall, the school provides a suitably broad curriculum, which supports pupils' well-being successfully. Curriculum plans demonstrate coverage of the areas of learning required in the Independent School Standards (Wales) regulations 2024. However, a few aspects of the curriculum, such as science, technology and humanities along with digital skills, lack rigour and regularity. Further, curriculum plans do not build systematically and coherently on pupils' knowledge and skills as they progress through the school. Furthermore, planning and assessment do not always link consistently well enough to pupils' additional learning needs. As a result, in the majority of lessons, activities do not provide sufficient challenge or opportunity to build on pupils' previous experiences and learning.

Teaching across the school is too variable. In a few lessons, where teaching is effective, teachers make their classes stimulating and engaging places. There are clear, relevant and challenging learning intentions where pupils can learn productively.

Senior leaders work cohesively and demonstrate a clear understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities. They undertake a suitable range of quality assurance work. As a result, they have developed a manageable range of school improvement priorities and identified a few inconsistencies in practice accurately. However, leaders' quality assurance of lessons does not focus sharply enough on pupils' progress or consistently identify aspects of teaching that would benefit from improvement.

The school is not fully compliant with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

Recommendations

R1 Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024

R2 Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment across the

school R3 Strengthen planning to develop pupils' skills across the curriculum

R4 Improve attendance

R5 Improve quality assurance processes to evaluate the provision at the school

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

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- ensure that teaching involves well planned lessons, effective teaching methods, suitable activities and wise management of class time.
- provide effective education for all pupils within a class to make progress, including pupils with statements and those for whom Welsh or English is an additional language

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.

What happens next

Since the school does not meet the standards required for registration, the Welsh Parliament will require the proprietor to submit an action plan within a specified period of time. This plan will set out the steps that the school will take to meet the standards, and the timescale within which it will complete each step.

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.

School context

Name of provider	ACT Schools
Proprietor	Richard Spear
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent school with additional learning provision
Residential provision?	No
Number of pupils on roll	57
Pupils of statutory school age	57
Start date of inspection	18/03/2024
<p>ACT Schools is an independent school with campuses in Cardiff and Caerphilly. It provides education for pupils aged 11 to 16 years who have additional learning needs, specifically social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The school is administered by ACT (Holdings) Ltd, a subsidiary of Cardiff and The Vale College.</p> <p>There are currently 57 pupils at the school. A minority of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A very few pupils are looked after by local authorities in Wales.</p> <p>The acting head of education has been in post for less than a year.</p> <p>The school's last monitoring visit was in May 2022. This is the school's first core inspection.</p>	

© Crown Copyright 2024: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 23/05/2024

Please note that the photographs displayed may not be of the school that is the subject of this report.