



Annual monitoring inspection report on:

Ty Bronllys

Date of inspection: February 2014

by

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

Estyn's annual monitoring visits to independent and independent special schools in Wales are required to report on whether the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) registration standards regulations for independent schools are met and, where they are not met, what they need to do in order to comply.

Further information regarding the regulations governing this monitoring visit can be found in the following documentation:

- Welsh Assembly Government: *Independent Schools Information and Registration Handbook*, April 2004; and
- Welsh Office Circular 37/94: *Independent schools which admit pupils with special educational needs*:
 - paragraphs 1-8: granting/removing approval;
 - paragraph 42: changes in character, management or control of the school; and
 - 37/94 paragraph 43: significant differences from approved number.

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Context

Ty Bronllys is an independent special school situated in a rural location close to the village of Bronllys in Powys. The school provides education for pupils aged 8 to 19 years, who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD).

The school's stated aim is to provide a safe, happy and stimulating environment for children and young people with ASD, within a framework of lifelong learning.

There are currently seven pupils on the school roll, all of whom are boys. They are all placed by local authorities in Wales. Nearly all pupils are resident in the registered on-site children's home operated by the proprietor. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN).

In April 2011, there was a change to the school's proprietor and in January 2012 a new headteacher took up post. During this monitoring visit there were temporary staffing arrangements in place, with experienced colleagues from within the wider organisation covering the absence of both class teachers.

Main findings

Strengths

The school's strengths are that:

- pupils have good access to a wide range of learning experiences including the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Touch Trust, and enterprise activities such as the student café. They gain appropriate qualifications in accredited courses;
- pupils use a picture exchange system very effectively to express their needs. The system is well-embedded in the day-to-day work of the school and pupils value the independence they gain;
- the classrooms and outdoor space provide an appropriate learning environment with suitable resources;
- specialist support services such as occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and music therapy make an important contribution to the learning programmes for all pupils;
- there is a well-structured performance management system that includes regular lesson observations and identifies areas for staff improvement;
- there are well-organised and detailed record files for each individual pupil that include information about their progress, care needs, medical needs, risk assessments and individual education plans (IEPs); and
- leaders have a strong commitment to continuous school improvement. There is a detailed self-evaluation report that identifies appropriate targets for school improvement.

Areas for development

The school's areas for development are that:

- although lesson observations and performance management processes focus well on approaches to teaching, the focus on the standards that pupils achieve is underdeveloped;
- the school improvement plan links well to the self-evaluation report. It prioritises areas for development, identifies staff responsible for implementing actions and sets realistic timescales. However, it does not identify the resources required to complete the actions;
- staff have made visits to other schools to identify and share good practice. However, these visits do not always result in learning that can be put in place at the school; and
- day-to-day recording of pupil progress is very general and does not provide a clear enough record of the small steps that pupils make.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the lesson observation process by including a clearer focus on the standards that pupils achieve
- R2 Strengthen the school improvement plan by including the support and resources required to address each action
- R3 Provide a more specific focus for visits to other schools so that staff can identify good practice to improve outcomes for pupils at Ty Bronllys
- R4 Ensure that day to day recording of pupils' progress identifies more specific information

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous note of visit or inspection report

Recommendation 1: Ensure that support staff in the classroom are confident in their roles and are proactive in engaging with pupils to support the teacher

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Staff provide effective behaviour and learning support for pupils and implement learning plans well. They demonstrate a good understanding of the individual needs and abilities of the pupils and provide useful feedback to pupils regarding progress against targets set out in IEPs.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that pupils attain qualifications in accredited courses

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

In 2013 all pupils gained appropriate qualifications in a range of accredited courses such as ASDAN (New Horizons, Transition Challenge, Towards Independence, Literacy & Numeracy in Every Day Life), AQA and the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award.

Three pupils achieved the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award in 2013. Two of these have now progressed to the Silver Award.

All pupils are enrolled on accredited courses and have completed units towards the qualifications.

Recommendation 3: Further refine assessment procedures to take more account of the small steps in all pupils' progress and provide more information about more able pupils' progress

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school uses a robust system to assess pupils' progress that is based on both published assessment schemes and in-house tracking against IEP targets. A new assessment scheme was introduced in November and plans are in place to use this on a termly basis.

The school monitors pupils' progress against their IEP targets closely. IEPs are reviewed every 6 months, in January and July. Staff use a proforma to record pupils' day-to-day progress against their targets. However, many comments are too general and do not provide enough detail. The headteacher monitors these records to ensure that staff comments link appropriately to pupils' targets.

Recommendation 4: Develop a more structured approach to preparing students for transition to future placements

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school makes appropriate arrangements for prospective pupils and their teachers to visit Ty Bronllys. Every pupil has a 'new placement' booklet when they join the school and also a booklet about their future placement when they are due to leave.

All pupils attend regular sessions that help them prepare for the future. They learn about the different jobs people do and identify their own areas of interest. Pupils keep and update their transition progress files during these lessons to ensure that everything is ready should a transfer be arranged at short notice. The content of these files is designed well and at an appropriate level to meet pupils' learning needs.

The school keeps detailed minutes of meetings regarding pupils' transfers that clearly identify actions agreed and persons responsible. The school arranges a timetable for pupils to visit their future placements and for staff from the new settings to visit Ty Bronllys, before transfer.

Recommendation 5: Extend opportunities for all staff to observe and share good practice

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

In the last year, all education staff have extended their experience by making at least one visit to observe practice in other schools. This has included visits to two special schools, units in maintained schools and a pupil referral unit. Staff have also had a few opportunities to observe practice within the proprietor's other school and college. However, these visits do not always result in learning that is relevant to Ty Bronllys.

There is an appropriate system for lesson observations, although the focus tends to be on teaching with less information about standards that pupils achieve. The headteacher carries out lesson observations and provides individual feedback to staff. Teachers observe the learning support assistants and make a record of the outcomes. This information is shared with the learning support assistants and is used to set targets for improvement.

The headteacher completes an internal audit of classrooms each term to ensure that the learning environment meets expectations. Areas for improvement are addressed promptly.

Recommendation 6: Consolidate the good work the school has already done in making improvements and continue to address the key priorities

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Leaders have a strong commitment to continuous school improvement. There is an effective self-evaluation process that draws on evidence from a wide range of quality assurance procedures and takes account of the views of staff, parents and pupils.

The self-evaluation report sets clear priorities for school improvement. The school has responded well to the recommendations of the last inspection report.

Compliance with the standards for registration

Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Standard 2: The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Standard 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Standard 4: The suitability of proprietors and staff

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Standard 5: Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 5

Standard 6: The provision of information

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Standard 7: The manner in which complaints are to be handled

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Recommendation regarding registration

When considering this school's registration the National Assembly for Wales may wish to have regard to the following recommendation:

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Inspectors' judgements on this annual monitoring inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.

School information

School	Ty Bronllys
School number	6666047
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	18 and 19 February 2014
Proprietor	Orbis Education and Care Ltd
Staff	Headteacher 2 teachers 2 learning support assistants
Number of pupils	7
Provision	52 Week Residential
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school	Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)
Last Section 163 inspection	1 November 2011
Last annual monitoring inspection	6 March 2013
Last CSSIW inspection	June 2013

Team information

Reporting Inspector	Anthony Mulcahy
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