



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Bryn-y-Maen Education Centre@Llwydgoed
Bryn-y-Maen
Colwyn Bay
Conwy
LL28 5EP**

Date of inspection: April 2013

by

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



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

| Judgement | What the judgement means |
|-----------------------|---|
| Excellent | Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice |
| Good | Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement |
| Adequate | Strengths outweigh areas for improvement |
| Unsatisfactory | Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths |

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

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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Bryn-y-Maen Education Centre is a local authority maintained provision registered as a pupil referral unit (PRU) for pupils living in Conwy. It provides full-time education for up to eight pupils at key stage 3. Pupils who attend Bryn-y-Maen PRU have had a poor record of attendance at mainstream school. They may also have had a negative experience of school or other issues in their personal lives. All pupils are dual-registered with their mainstream secondary school.

Sixty per cent of pupils attending Bryn-y-Maen PRU are eligible for free school meals and all are on the special educational needs register. No pupils have statements of special educational needs. All pupils are from English-speaking homes. There are currently no looked after pupils attending.

The PRU aims to provide all pupils with the emotional and social support to return to their mainstream school, or move to alternative educational provision.

This is the first inspection of Bryn-y-Maen PRU. It opened in February 2010, and was formally part of Gyffin Education Centre PRU. It occupies the site of a small village school in a rural location in the hills above the Conwy Valley. It is not appropriate, because of the nature and range of pupils' learning needs, to compare the standards that pupils achieve at the PRU with national averages or to analyse trends of groups over time.

Summary

| | |
|--|-------------|
| The PRU's current performance | Good |
| The PRU's prospects for improvement | Good |

Current performance

Bryn-y-Maen PRU is good because:

- all pupils make good progress and achieve good standards;
- all pupils improve their confidence and attendance;
- teaching is of good quality;
- there is good care, support and guidance; and
- the teacher in charge provides clear leadership.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are judged as good because:

- all staff effectively work together as a team and have high expectations of the pupils;
- the PRU works closely with partners to provide additional support and guidance for all pupils;
- the teacher in charge and management committee share a clear vision of the future for the PRU; and
- the PRU has appropriate staff, resources and strategies for improvement.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that marking clearly tells pupils what they need to do to improve their work

R2 Encourage all pupils to evaluate their own work and the work of others

R3 Use data to more effectively monitor progress of groups of learners in order to inform planning and development

R4 Effectively measure the impact and quality of external provision within the PRU

What happens next?

The PRU will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Pupils who join the PRU have often had poor attendance at their mainstream schools and have little confidence in themselves as learners. However, due to the individual support and encouragement they receive from staff, the pupils show a new commitment to learning, greatly improve their attendance and make good progress in their standards of attainment.

All pupils make good progress at the PRU. However, girls generally achieve better than boys. Effective strategies to address this discrepancy have resulted in improved standards in boys' outcomes. Pupils respond well to their individual targets and show improvement against previous achievements. Those pupils who have free school meals make good progress against their prior attainments on entry.

In relation to their individual social and emotional needs and abilities, all pupils make good progress in developing their skills. For example, they use their reading skills well to collect information from different sources and discuss events in books.

Most pupils are developing skills needed to write clearly, and the more able show good imagination in creative writing. They use these skills well to produce the PRU's own magazine, written and edited by the pupils. Most pupils spell familiar words correctly and respond well to questions in writing. A few pupils are unsure about how to punctuate, such as knowing when to use capital letters in written tasks.

Nearly all pupils show increased confidence when speaking and communicating with others. They readily use a wide range of vocabulary when discussing topics in their lessons. They all listen attentively to others in different situations and concentrate well on their activities, showing sustained focus. This is often in marked contrast to their previous behaviour.

Nearly all pupils show good progress in thinking skills. They respond well in discussions regarding current affairs. Members of the school council show good decision-making skills as well as showing developing skills in speaking and listening to others.

Although not a requirement for pupils who are not from a Welsh-medium school, the PRU includes incidental Welsh as part of its provision. Most pupils make steady progress in their use of basic incidental Welsh. However, they are less confident when using written Welsh.

Most pupils make good use of numeracy skills especially when applied to practical situations. For example, pupils apply their numeracy skills to run and organise the Breakfast Club where they cost ingredients and calculate individual bills for pupils.

Nearly all pupils show well-developed information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They effectively undertake research, record their findings, present work and enhance their learning using electronic tablets and other devices.

All pupils move on to appropriate provision at key stage 4.

Wellbeing: Good

All pupils state that they feel safe at the PRU. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and realise the importance of a healthy diet. They show a good awareness of safety issues when undertaking tasks in the PRU's garden or when cooking in food technology lessons.

Nearly all pupils recognise the benefits of and enjoy participating in PE lessons and keeping fit. These activities have a good impact on their emotional wellbeing.

All pupils show a positive attitude towards learning. They participate eagerly and enthusiastically and are keen to come to the PRU on a regular basis. The significant improvement shown by all pupils in their attendance rates since enrolling at the PRU is a major achievement.

Pupils understand the PRU's system of awarding merits and rewards. This has helped ensure that all pupils behave well, are courteous to others and are more confident in conversing with adults.

Pupils develop mature attitudes as they take more responsibility and participate in the various activities at the PRU. They readily involve themselves in activities within the community such as participation in the local leisure centre and helping in an animal sanctuary. They also participate enthusiastically in numerous projects and workshops run by a local art gallery. This particular relationship has not only developed and improved pupils' artistic talents, but has also had an extremely positive impact upon their self-esteem and self-confidence.

Pupils make good use of their voice in the PRU council to influence developments. For example, they helped to design the school garden and a notable feature is their role in organising the PRU's Breakfast Club. This has enabled them to develop confidence and develop social and communication skills in a practical and functional situation.

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| Key Question 2: How good is provision? | Good |
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Learning experiences: Good

The PRU has a clear statement of curriculum policy. It ensures that schemes of work are relevant to pupils' learning needs. Effective planning ensures a broad and balanced curriculum that motivates pupils to re-engage with education. The good balance between group and individual work ensures pupils have enough time to work on their own and to collaborate with their peers. The structured provision for ICT, communication and numeracy skills supports pupils effectively to overcome previous barriers to learning and develop confidence.

Good links with mainstream schools and other providers ensure reintegration remains a focus, particularly as pupils near the end of their placement at the PRU. Effective planning and co-ordination of support enables pupils to stage their return to mainstream through planned curricular activities. However, the majority of pupils do not reintegrate into mainstream schools at key stage 3. For these pupils, the PRU supports transition to alternative provision through the Conwy and Llandrillo Working Together project based at the local college of further education.

The PRU offers interesting curricular provision for pupils. This contributes significantly towards developing pupils' academic and social skills. Visits from a local artist, links with Barnardo's and a historical study of Conwy allow pupils to identify with and learn more about the various aspects of their community. Visits to a local leisure centre provide pupils with good opportunities for physical education.

The PRU's planning ensures that there are opportunities to learn about aspects of the Welsh dimension are included across a range of topics.

Aspects of sustainable development and global citizenship are effectively included across subjects.

Teaching: Good

In nearly all lessons the quality of teaching is good. In all lessons, teachers effectively motivate pupils to take a full and active part in their learning. However, in the very few lessons where teaching was only adequate the lessons lacked appropriate pace and challenge and there was too little feedback to pupils.

All staff have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Teachers and support staff have very good relationships with, and extensive knowledge of, the pupils they teach. In nearly all lessons, teachers plan lessons effectively in order to meet individual pupils' needs. They use a range of strategies to meet the needs and abilities of all pupils.

Teachers ensure that there is a good balance between individual and group work. They successfully adapt lessons to meet individual pupils' needs and encourage pupils to help each other with their work. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning and that of their peers.

Although marking is up to date, it does not tell students clearly enough what they need to do to improve their work and move on in their learning. However, pupils regularly receive very high quality and individualised verbal feedback during lessons and in tutorial time.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The PRU has clear and effective policies to promote pupils' health and wellbeing. The staff are consistent in their approach and successfully promote positive behaviour and high expectations of pupils. They understand the difficulties experienced by individual pupils and recognise and celebrate the efforts individuals overcome to attend.

The nurturing, caring and safe environment positively influences pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing. This means that pupils make significant improvements in their attendance and are motivated to learn and participate enthusiastically in activities.

There is good support and guidance and the PRU ensures that all pupils have access to a wide range of appropriate external support services to help them deal with personal issues.

The PRU appropriately identifies pupils' individual learning needs and uses suitable strategies, resources and support to meet their needs. However, pupils are not always involved in deciding upon their targets or fully aware of them. As a result, they do not know what they need to do to improve.

The PRU places great importance upon its relationships with parents and carers, providing them an opportunity to discuss issues relating to the pupils as and when required. Parents and carers are encouraged to share concerns that may affect pupils' emotional wellbeing. This enables staff to understand pupils' concerns and make good use of suitable strategies to address these in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

The PRU successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Collective worship sessions allow pupils to explore and challenge attitudes and provide useful opportunities for personal reflection.

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

Learning environment: Good

The PRU is an inclusive community and successfully provides equality of opportunity for all. Diversity is celebrated within the daily life and work of the school and during acts of collective worship.

The new premises are spacious, secure and appropriate for the number of pupils. The PRU is in an old school building, effectively refurbished to be bright and welcoming. The outside areas are developing successfully with the help of the pupils. This includes a number of planters and flowerbeds designed and maintained by pupils with the support of staff.

Classrooms are of suitable size and are very well resourced. Resources are well matched to the age and needs of pupils. Pupils take pride in their learning environment and show respect for the building, both inside and out.

Wall displays are informative and enhance pupils' learning. Toilet facilities are clean and modern and provide separate facilities for boys, girls and staff. However, there is no disabled access toilet or changing facilities.

There are sufficient, well-qualified teaching and support staff for the number of pupils on roll. The part-time school secretary provides efficient support to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school.

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| Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? | Good |
|--|-------------|

Leadership: Good

The teacher in charge has a clear vision of how to move the PRU forward and communicates this effectively to all staff involved. The PRU staff have successfully implemented a range of useful policies and plans that meet the needs of all pupils.

The PRU has made particularly good progress in some areas of national priority. For example, all pupils have improved their attendance and they make consistently good progress in both literacy and numeracy whilst at the PRU.

The teacher in charge undertakes lesson observations of all teaching staff as part of an effective programme of performance management. The resulting performance reviews clearly identify individual targets and the PRU meets any training needs.

The management committee works closely with the PRU and shares its vision for improvement. In general, it understands the work of the PRU, provides clear strategic direction and appropriate support. However, the PRU does not use data effectively enough to judge how well it is doing in areas such as measuring the progress of specific groups of pupils.

Improving quality: Good

The teacher in charge understands the strengths of the PRU and the areas in need of further development. All staff work well together as a team and are actively involved in the process of review and self-evaluation.

The self-evaluation is evidence-based and detailed, but is not always evaluative enough. The PRU collects data on attendance and has recently introduced better tools to measure and record pupil performance. However, the PRU does not currently use data well enough to monitor progress of groups of learners and plan for future improvements.

The PRU's development plan is realistic and identifies who is responsible for each area of improvement. The management committee has ratified all targets for improvement. These targets link well with the self-evaluation.

All staff have been involved in professional learning communities within and outside of the local authority. They work closely with other PRUs to improve outcomes for pupils through sharing training and information.

Partnership working: Good

The PRU works very effectively with a wide range of different agencies and partners. In the most developed partnerships, outcomes and wellbeing of pupils are measurably improved. For example, the joint work with a number of different agencies has helped pupils to overcome anxieties around attending the PRU.

The PRU has developed good strategic links with all of the secondary schools within the authority. This means it is able to respond effectively to support the needs of learners through supported packages for reintegration to mainstream school.

The PRU has excellent relationships with parents and carers and fully involves them in decisions and plans for their children.

Effective partnerships with agencies such as the Community and Mental Health Service mean that the PRU is able to plan cohesive individualised packages of support for pupils. As a result, pupils get the help and support they need to improve their attendance.

The PRU has an on-going dialogue with its partners about their joint work with pupils. However, there are no formal arrangements to assure the impact of this joint work on pupil standards.

Resource management: Good

Teaching and support staff have appropriate knowledge and expertise to meet the range of pupils' educational, social and behavioural difficulties. The teacher in charge deploys staff effectively. Support staff have a significant impact on the pupils' learning experiences and on the quality of care, support and guidance.

Performance management procedures are now in place and are effective in identifying staff training needs. All staff have appropriate planning, preparation and assessment time. This enables them to be effective in providing pupils with a wide variety of learning experiences.

Spending priorities and training programmes link closely with the PRU's improvement plan. The teacher in charge works closely with the management committee and the local authority to ensure best value.

The PRU's financial management is efficient and effective. Given the good standards achieved by the pupils, the good teaching and effective management of resources, the PRU provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received.

Responses to learner questionnaires

There is no commentary on the learner questionnaires due to the small number of responses received.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Alec Clark | Reporting Inspector |
| William Glyn Griffiths | Team Inspector |
| Julie Price | Lay Inspector |
| Sherill Worgan | Peer Inspector |
| Mark Peters | School Nominee |

Copies of the report

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

Year groups, the Foundation Phase and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|
| Year | N | R | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 | Y6 |
| Ages | 3-4 | 4-5 | 5-6 | 6-7 | 7-8 | 8-9 | 9-10 | 10-11 |

Secondary phase:

| | | | | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year | Y7 | Y8 | Y9 | Y10 | Y11 | Y12 | Y13 |
| Ages | 11-12 | 12-13 | 13-14 | 14-15 | 15-16 | 16-17 | 17-18 |

The Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Foundation Phase | Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 |
| Key stage 2 | Year 3 to Year 6 |
| Key stage 3 | Year 7 to Year 9 |
| Key stage 4 | Year 10 and Year 11 |

Glossary of ALN terms

ADHD: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

ALN: additional learning needs

ASD: Autistic Spectrum Disorders, includes Asperger's Syndrome

ATR: additional teacher resource

BESD, ESBD or SEBD: Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties

CoP: Code of Practice

HI: hearing impairment

MSI: multi-sensory impairment

PMLD: profound and multiple learning difficulties

SpLD: specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia

VI: visual impairment