



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

**Vale of Glamorgan Key Stage 3 & 4 PRU
The Amelia Trust Farm
Whitton Rosser
Five Mile Lane
Barry
CF62 3AS**

Date of inspection: November 2012

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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Context

The Vale of Glamorgan Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) caters for up to 56 pupils. There are two sites. One site is in Cowbridge, where key stage 4 pupils can access 36 places on a part-time basis. The other is based at the site of the Amelia Trust, a training provider, in open countryside, within a working farm that members of the public and young adults with learning disabilities visit. Twenty key stage 3 pupils access full time places at this site.

The PRU also works in partnership with Gateway to Engagement (G2E), run by the Vale of Glamorgan local authority youth service. This adds to the part-time programme offered to pupils at key stage 4 and enables them to access the recommended 25 hours of provision. These pupils can also attend the farm at the Amelia Trust on a part-time basis.

The key stage 4 provision offers GCSE/Entry Level qualifications as well as work experience and college placements. Pupils also access a range of Open College Network qualifications.

There is a teacher-in-charge at each site and a headteacher has overall control of the provision. The current headteacher took up post in May 2010.

Pupils attending the PRU have wide-ranging needs. All have been assessed as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and some have additional learning needs. They have been unsuccessful in their schools, are often unable to manage their behaviour and find it difficult to relate to others. Many have poor basic skills and are not used to attending school regularly. They have a low opinion of themselves and have negative attitudes to learning. At the time of inspection, there were eight pupils with statements of special educational needs due to their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The PRU has significant involvement from external agencies such as Social Services and the Youth Offending Service. Barnardo's provide counselling for pupils at both sites. It is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve at the PRU with national averages or to analyse trends of groups over time because of the nature and range of pupils' learning needs.

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Adequate

Current performance

The Vale of Glamorgan PRU's current performance is judged as good because:

- pupils' standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are consistently good;
- pupils gain an appropriate range of qualifications and almost all move onto further education or training;
- the quality of teaching is good, and in a few cases excellent;
- staff meet individual needs well;
- it works closely with a wide range of specialist services and partners to improve outcomes for pupils; and
- leadership and management are good.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are judged as adequate because despite this good performance and the many improvements made since the headteacher's recent appointment:

- the local authority and the PRU do not make flexible arrangements to accommodate a small group of key stage 4 pupils who wish to attend the PRU full time. This is having a negative impact on these pupils' wellbeing and also overall attendance rates at the PRU;
- the PRU is not using data well enough to track attendance, behaviour and exclusions so that it can plan to make improvements; and
- the toilets at the key stage 3 site are not secure and this was not addressed after the last inspection or recognised in self-evaluation.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that there are appropriate arrangements to maintain the offer of the recommended 25 hours of provision, for the small group of pupils at key stage 4 when they do not respond to the vocational part of the programme;
- R2 ensure that there are sufficient and secure toilet facilities for the sole use of pupils based at the farm site;
- R3 make better use of data to effectively track attendance, behaviour and exclusions, evaluate progress and inform strategies for improvement; and
- R4 systematically share information with partner organisations.

What happens next?

Estyn will revisit the PRU in about a year's time. The visit will focus on progress against the recommendations in the original report and will lead to a brief report that will be sent to the PRU.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most pupils who attend the PRU achieve good standards in relation to their learning needs and abilities. They improve their behaviour over time. They learn to control their anger and express their feelings more appropriately. They develop the communication skills that they need to relate to and work well with others. They learn to listen to others, follow instructions and wait their turn. In lessons, most pupils remain on task. They show pride in their work and take care with their presentation. Across the PRU, pupils use ICT competently for research, storing their work and designing exciting presentations.

Pupils make very good progress in improving their literacy and numeracy skills. They use these developing skills effectively to read aloud with confidence, draft and redraft texts and understand addition. Pupils take responsibility for their learning, know the targets they are working towards and learn to work more independently. Older pupils show maturity in discussions, use a wide range of vocabulary and reflect on important issues such as cyber bullying and abuse on line. Pupils show good recall of simple Welsh phrases and use incidental Welsh during lessons.

Due to the high levels of support they receive from their keyworkers, five pupils have been successful in joining mainstream schools for a range of lessons, including Welsh. Pupils and their parents are delighted with this significant achievement.

Many pupils enjoy their work experiences. These include working in hairdressing, construction, the media and on the farm. Last year, just over 85% of pupils who left the PRU moved onto college placements. Pupils gain a wide range of appropriate qualifications. These include GCSEs in English, mathematics and preparation for working life, Entry Level and Essential Skills Wales awards and Open College Network awards such as life skills. However, despite attending the PRU site in Cowbridge regularly and engaging well, just over 25% of these key stage 4 pupils do not attend the other part of their programme led by G2E. This has a negative impact on their progress.

Wellbeing: Adequate

The majority of pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and many have a positive attitude towards physical exercise. Most boys participate well in a range of fitness and sporting events. However, fewer girls take up these opportunities.

The majority of pupils feel safe in school and show positive attitudes towards their learning. Most pupils understand what they have to do to improve their learning and behaviour. They benefit from appropriate behaviour targets that encourage them to reflect on and take responsibility for their actions. Most pupils behave well towards each other, staff and visitors and engage well in activities. Due to the good support

from staff at the PRU, pupils gain valuable insights into their feelings and behaviour. As a result, pupils learn to manage their behaviour over time. The total number of days lost by pupils who have been excluded has reduced significantly over the last three years. Pupils recognise and value the support they receive from a Barnardo's counsellor and the help with anger management they receive from a trained member of the support staff.

Many pupils improve their attendance at the PRU compared with at their previous schools. Despite these improvements, average attendance during 2011-2012 was too low at just under 69%. At just over 58%, boys in Year 10 have the lowest attendance. A minority of pupils in key stage 4 attend the Cowbridge provision for three days each week, and do not attend off-site provision. This has a negative impact their wellbeing and on the PRU's overall attendance.

The pupils' involvement in the local community increases their self-confidence. They make very good use of the skills they have learned at the PRU in a wider context. For example, they design promotional leaflets for local events, fill boxes for a Christmas charity and raise funds for Children in Need.

The majority of pupils participate enthusiastically in work-related activities that help them to plan effectively for life and work outside of school. There is an active pupil council. Pupils discuss issues such as recycling, library books and furniture for the PRU. However, pupils are not involved in decision-making about the curriculum and the core work of the PRU.

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

Pupils benefit from a wide and balanced curriculum within and beyond the PRU. The curriculum is well planned across subjects and areas of learning. The PRU has developed extensive links with local employers. These links successfully provide a wide variety of opportunities for work placements and other learning pathways. Learning experiences are adapted well to meet the needs of pupils according to age and ability.

The PRU is beginning to make good progress to support the re-integration of individual pupils back into school.

The PRU places appropriate emphasis on the development of skills. For example, pupils receive targeted support in writing and reading in all subjects. The use of ICT across the curriculum is particularly well developed. The PRU successfully develops the pupils' use of skills to prepare them for work, training and college courses. However, the PRU does not always provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop thinking skills in all areas of their learning.

Although not a requirement, the PRU recognises that it is good practice to develop Welsh language skills, and it has started to provide more opportunities for pupils' acquisition and use of Welsh. This is not yet fully embedded in either key stage within the PRU.

The PRU encourages pupils to think about the need for sustainability and to respect their environment. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their understanding of Wales as a nation within the context of the wider world. These include educational visits to places of interest such as the 'Big Pit' and the national museum for Wales, St. Fagan's.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good and in a few cases excellent. Teachers and learning support assistants expect pupils to do their best and behave well. They know their pupils well and encourage them to tackle new tasks and to become more independent. They manage pupils' behaviour skilfully and help them to recognise and deal with their anger. As a result, pupils reduce the number of incidents where they lose control. Teachers carefully plan their lessons to meet all pupils' needs and abilities. They recap on previous learning, set clear learning objectives and summarise what pupils have learned. They provide a wide range of activities to hold pupils' interest throughout the lessons. Their resources are often tailor made and innovative to suit individuals and help them grasp difficult concepts, such as fractions. They pay very good attention to developing pupils' literacy skills. Teachers use ICT very well, including interactive whiteboards, to engage pupils and support their independent learning.

Teachers use comprehensive initial and ongoing assessment to track pupils' progress. They work with pupils to set targets for improvement. They regularly remind pupils of these targets and give them useful feedback on their progress towards them. However, marking is too variable across the subjects. It does not always show pupils how to improve their performance.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate

There are clear policies in place to promote pupils' health and wellbeing. The PRU works well with a wide variety of outside agencies. The school nurse is particularly effective in helping promote appropriate sex and relationship education within the PRU. This is in addition to a comprehensive PSE program delivered by teachers. Pupils have access to well developed and effective counselling services. These help them to work and reflect on the difficult issues that have had a negative impact on their behaviour. These issues include dealing with anger and improving how they relate to others.

The PRU works closely with the Police Community Liaison Officer, who visits regularly to discuss important issues that may be faced by pupils. These include domestic violence, drugs, personal safety and cyber-exploitation.

Individual risk assessments are appropriate. However, this valuable information is not always formally shared with partners.

The PRU positively promotes the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils. Daily assemblies and tutorial time at the end of the school day give pupils good opportunities for reflection. The school also benefits from the farm's Deacon who holds regular acts of collective worship.

The PRU successfully meets its statutory requirements in relation to pupils' additional learning needs. It uses provision mapping effectively to ensure that all learners' needs are met.

The PRU has an appropriate policy and well-developed procedures around safeguarding. However, the toilets on the farm site are shared by staff, pupils, farmworkers and members of the public. This makes supervision throughout the day difficult and gives cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The school has successfully established a positive ethos that is shared by staff and pupils. Staff and pupils value and care for their resources, equipment and the building. Staff provide excellent role models for pupils, which encourages respect and tolerance of others. All staff have a very good understanding of pupils' individual needs.

The PRU's buildings and classrooms are well resourced. There is wide range of attractive and informative displays. The buildings are suitably furnished and maintained.

Pupils are encouraged to fully utilise the unique farm setting and additional resources it provides.

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

The headteacher and other senior staff in the PRU work well together to create a positive learning environment where pupils and staff feel valued. They provide effective leadership and communicate high expectations for staff and pupils. As a result, all staff share a strong commitment to the PRU and strive to achieve better outcomes for the pupils.

The senior management team have a common understanding of the PRU's priorities for development and engage all staff in working together to achieve these. Through this team work, there are clear improvements in the curriculum, resources and the quality of teaching and learning. The PRU takes good account of local and national priorities. For example, pupils' reading, writing and numeracy skills are improving significantly due to the PRU's good focus on developing skills.

There are clearly defined management structures and all staff understand their roles. The headteacher and the teachers-in-charge of key stages 3 and 4 meet regularly, which helps them to resolve day-to-day issues and continually review progress and plan further developments. Regular staff meetings ensure that everyone is up-to-date.

Performance management takes good account of the areas in the PRU's improvement plan and identifies individual training needs. The headteacher regularly observes teaching. However, classroom observations and performance reviews do not always identify clear enough targets to help staff further improve their practice.

Generally, the management committee, supported by the local authority, provide appropriate leadership to help improve teaching and learning in the PRU. However, arrangements for re-integrating pupils into mainstream schools are informal. As a result, not all headteachers are signed up to the aim of re-integration and this hampers the ability of the PRU to support pupils back into mainstream education.

In the last year, the management committee has strengthened its structure to include sub-groups for curriculum matters and behaviour and attendance. As a result, members are developing a better understanding of the performance of the PRU and the impact of new developments. There is also an improved focus on safeguarding. Secondary headteacher attendance at management committee meetings is not regular enough.

The headteacher's reports to the management committee do not always include enough up-to-date information to enable it to scrutinise performance effectively.

Improving quality: Adequate

Senior managers have a good understanding of the PRU's strengths and the areas for development. There is an ethos of continuous improvement and managers and staff are reflective and keen to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils. However, self-evaluation processes are new and are not yet regular or analytical enough. The management committee had only limited involvement in the self-evaluation report.

The PRU is improving the range of data it holds and now has an electronic system to track individual pupils' achievements. Managers and staff use this well to evaluate the effectiveness of targeted interventions for literacy and numeracy. However, this system is not yet used well enough to collate and analyse data in relation to behaviour and attendance.

The PRU Improvement Plan is of good quality and identifies a manageable number of appropriate priorities for improvement. The PRU and the local authority were slow to address the recommendations and shortcomings identified in the previous inspection. However, they have made considerable progress since the appointment of the current headteacher in 2010. In particular, the PRU has quickly ensured that the new provision for key stage 4 pupils on the Cowbridge site is of a good quality.

The PRU is developing effective networks with local schools and other PRUs to share practice and improve performance. The headteacher regularly attends the secondary headteachers' forum.

The local authority provides good support and challenge to the PRU, in particular for curriculum developments. The PRU is part of the local authority's Review and Development process which, through work with the systems leader, helps to confirm priorities for improvement.

Partnership working: Good

The PRU works effectively with a wide range of external agencies and has set up appropriate service level agreements. Links with Careers Wales are very effective in

supporting the pupils' transition onto continued education and the world of work. However, courses offered by some learning providers are not always fully monitored for their quality and suitability.

The recent introduction of two key workers to aid re-integration into mainstream schools has had a positive impact on the quality and level of communication between the schools. This work helps to improve the stability of pupils' placements and ensure their wellbeing is maintained.

Communication between parents/carers and the school is good. There is informal communication between work placement and training providers. However, there is a need to formalise this communication to ensure efficient sharing of information.

There are now clear links between school staff and mainstream schools, other PRUs and a special school in the area to share information and help support delivery and moderation of work. However, pupils' access to a wider range of opportunities is limited because the PRU has no formal links with the local 14-19 Network.

Resource management: Adequate

Overall, the PRU manages its resources well and establishes effective partnerships to achieve positive outcomes for pupils. As a result, it provides good value for money.

Teaching and support staff in the PRU are effectively deployed across the two sites to make the best use of their skills and expertise. As a result, the PRU provides a broad curriculum and effective support to individual pupils. It makes good use of teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time. However, there is not enough non-teaching time provided to support the teacher-in-charge of key stage 4 to fully undertake this role.

Staff have a wide range of training opportunities that link well to school priorities and their own development needs. This training has a positive impact on classroom practice and pupils' progress.

Pupils have access to good quality learning resources, including individual laptop computers. The PRU's access to the farm facilities broadens the curriculum through their use of the music suite, the sports hall and the pottery and woodwork workshops.

The school's budget is developed and managed by the local authority. The headteacher requests additional funding when needed through regular meetings with the Head of Pupil Support. Spending is well focused on the priorities within the PRU improvement plan. However, the PRU, its management committee and the local authority do not plan well enough to ensure that provision meets all pupils' needs appropriately. The overall model of provision for pupils in key stage 4 is based on part time attendance at the PRU and a programme of vocational opportunities. As a result, the PRU is unable to provide full time education for a minority of pupils who do not take up these opportunities.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received was too low to provide a representative view. However, these were taken into consideration during the inspection.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Thirty-one out of thirty-eight pupils responded to the questionnaire and overall are very positive about the PRU and feel that they are doing well. Almost all feel that they have someone to talk to if they are worried. They agree that they feel safe and that the PRU teaches them to improve their health. Most pupils feel that the PRU deals well with bullying and that they are listened to and encouraged to take responsibility. They believe that they are encouraged to respect other people's backgrounds and that they receive respect for theirs. They feel that they have enough books and equipment. However, over half of the pupils who responded did not agree that pupils behave well.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Claire Yardley	Reporting Inspector
Alec Clark	Team Inspector
Jassa Scott	Team Inspector
Bernard Harrington	Lay Inspector
Teresa Foster Evans	Peer Inspector
John Wagstaff	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups 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 LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	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 four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	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