



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

A report on

Craig Y Parc School

Date of inspection: January 2022

by

Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Craig Y Parc School

Craig Y Parc is an independent day school for pupils from age 3 to 19 years. It is situated alongside Ty Cwtch registered children's home, which provides residential care for eight young people. Currently, there are 22 pupils on roll at the school, which includes 11 pupils from the children's home and 11 who are day pupils. All pupils have statements of special educational need (SEN) or education, health and care plans (EHCP). A very few pupils have looked-after children status (LAC).

The school provides education for pupils with a range of complex physical needs and associated learning difficulties. These include cerebral palsy, dysphagia, and epilepsy.

The school's proprietor is Ambito Education operating under the parent company Saludem Healthcare, which provides services for young people and adults with complex support needs. Most pupils at the school are placed by authorities in South Wales. A very few pupils are placed by authorities in England.

Since the last annual monitoring visit in January 2019, there has been a change in leadership at the school. The current principal took up her post in November 2020 having previously been employed as the head of education from January 2020. The assistant principal joined the school in April 2021.

Main findings

Strengths

The safeguarding culture and practice across the school is strong. Senior leaders monitor and review these robust procedures regularly. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities well to safeguard pupils. The school has a well-planned professional development schedule in place, which provides staff with regular safeguarding training. In addition, leaders use weekly staff meetings effectively to strengthen staff's understanding, using relevant safeguarding scenarios for discussion. These meetings provide valuable opportunities to reflect and share good practice across all staff.

The recently appointed principal and vice principal have a clear vision for the school. Strengths and areas for development are identified appropriately in the school development plan.

Senior leaders have developed positive working relationships across all staff teams through effective communication and regular staff meetings. Staff have many opportunities to share practice and information and this is contributing well to the collaborative approaches in place at the school. This includes the integrated therapy model at the school. As a result, all staff share high expectations for pupils.

The school's integrated therapy model strongly supports the complex needs of pupils and is strengthening the skill set of all staff. Weekly multi-disciplinary team meetings involving therapists, teachers and learning support staff provide valuable opportunities for the sharing of information to inform teachers' planning for pupils' next steps in learning.

There is a strong nurturing approach across the school. Staff have highly effective working relationships with pupils and build significant levels of trust and communication with them to support each pupil's needs well.

Areas for development

The school does not comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Processes for school self evaluation involving all relevant stakeholders, including school staff, are at the very early stages of development.

The re-structure of staff at the school is beginning to strengthen teachers' roles as team leaders. The roles of middle leaders are not clear and, as a result, opportunities for distributed leadership are underdeveloped.

A system to track pupil progress across the school has recently been implemented. All staff have received training and support to record pupil information effectively. However, this system is at the early stages of development and it is too early to comment on its impact.

The fabric of the school building is worn, and areas of the school require attention to improve the learning environment for the pupils. This includes access to consistent

internet connectivity, which is essential for pupils who use assistive technology in their day-to-day learning.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003
- R2 Strengthen self-evaluation processes across the school to involve all stakeholders
- R3 Ensure that all staff use the newly-developed pupil tracking system to monitor pupil progress and inform teachers' planning
- R4 Improve the learning environment for pupils across the school

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous visit or inspection report

Recommendation 1: Ensure compliance with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003

The school continues not to comply with the Independent School Standards (Wales) 2003.

Recommendation 2: Ensure stability in the leadership and management of the school

Senior leaders are beginning to establish an acceptable level of stability in the leadership of the school.

The current principal took up post in November 2020 having previously been employed at the school as the head of education from January 2020. Since she was appointed, the principal has provided effective leadership for the school. Leadership was further strengthened with the recent appointment of the assistant principal in April 2021. In addition, there is a strong commitment to support and extend the distributed leadership model at the school through the development of middle leaders. However, this initiative is at an early stage of development and it is too early to evaluate its impact.

The recent stability in the leadership and management of the school is evident through improvements seen across many areas. For example, the revised aims and ethos of the school now meet the needs of the pupils better, and there is increased rigour in quality assurance processes and curriculum planning at the school. This is enabling the school to begin to make appropriate progress against this recommendation.

Recommendation 3: Provide training and support for the newly appointed school leadership team to fulfil their roles successfully

Since the last annual monitoring visit to the school, the leadership team has changed again. Senior leaders feel supported in their role by the wider company and have a clear vision of how their roles will be developed and progressed over time. The principal has benefited from the opportunity to attend a company leadership course. This is supporting her appropriately to address issues in health and safety and human resource management. The school's appropriate working relationships with the company head of standards and head of quality as well as the regional director for education provide senior leaders with useful opportunities for professional dialogue to progress improvement at the school.

The school has improved its engagement with an appropriate variety of providers to form strong supportive partnerships. These include the local authority safeguarding team and local health board. These partnerships provide senior leaders with important opportunities to share best practice in safeguarding and specialist areas such as teaching for the visually and hearing impaired. As a result, senior leaders are gaining valuable support to enhance their roles.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen systems to quality assure the work of the school

Senior leaders are beginning to establish suitable processes and systems to quality assure the work of the school. This is further strengthened by changes to the curriculum model to provide pupils with an integrated approach to therapy and education.

Senior leaders know the strengths and areas for development of the school well. There are regular scheduled activities in place to monitor the effectiveness of the processes that have been implemented. For example, lesson and peer observations are in place. These activities are supporting staff well to identify and share good practice across the school.

The school's self-evaluation processes are appropriate. However, they are at the early stages of development. An ambitious three-year strategic plan is in place. This identifies the aims and aspirations for the school clearly and has strong links to the annual school development plan. This plan identifies a suitable range of priorities to address the most immediate areas for development.

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, 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

The school does not fully meet the regulatory requirements for this standard. In order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school should:

- Ensure that in the case of a proprietor which is a corporation, Scottish firm or body of persons, the responsible individual has applied for an appropriate disclosure and barring certificate and that the application has been countersigned by the National Assembly for the purpose of Part V of the Police Act 1997. (4(aa))

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 this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 7.

Recommendation regarding continued registration

When considering this school's registration the Welsh Government may wish to have regard to the following recommendation:

The school does not currently meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. To comply fully with these requirements, the school should address the issues identified above for each standard.

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

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([Estyn Site](#))

The report was produced in accordance with section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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