



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

A report on

Caban Aur

Date of inspection: February 2022

by

Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Caban Aur

Caban Aur is a small independent school owned by Afon Goch Children's Homes Limited. It is set in its own grounds, in a rural setting on Ynys Môn, surrounded by a nature reserve. The school provides education for up to four pupils looked after by their local authorities who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils reside at one of the company's two children's homes. There is currently one pupil on the school roll.

The school accommodation consists of a small classroom within the children's home. Since the last monitoring visit in December 2019, there has been a change in the leadership of the school. The new headteacher was appointed in September 2021. He is supported by one part-time teacher and a learning support assistant.

The last core inspection of the school was in February 2017.

Main findings

Strengths

The school provides a caring and supportive community where staff provide a high level of personal support for pupils and know their interests well. Teaching and residential care staff work closely together to plan activities for pupils based on individualised timetables.

Throughout the pandemic, education and care staff worked together effectively to enable the school to remain open, keep pupils safe and support their wellbeing and learning. Teaching staff adapted their planning thoughtfully to enable lessons to be delivered online, with care staff supporting pupils in the home suitably.

The home within which the school is situated is located in an attractive rural setting on the edge of a nature reserve. The external environment provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to work in the garden and for outdoor education.

Areas for development

The school does not meet the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Over the last five years, the school has had four headteachers. These changes in the leadership of the school, together with the disruption caused by the pandemic to the normal operation of the school, have impacted significantly on the school's ability to remain up-to-date with changes in national education priorities, to evaluate robustly its own provision and to set strategic priorities for improvement. As a result, the roles and responsibilities of the headteacher in relation to the co-ordination of the curriculum are not clear and the school has made inadequate progress against the recommendations from the last monitoring visit. Given this unsatisfactory rate of progress and an increase in the areas of non-compliance with the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the Welsh Government may wish to consider that the school should not increase the number of pupils above the one pupil currently on roll until these matters have been addressed.

The small size of the school means that the school relies on links with other providers to extend the curriculum it offers to meet individual pupils' interests and abilities. This includes providing pupils with opportunities to complete accredited examinations at a suitable level and to attend work related learning placements. However, these links are not extensive or established well enough to enable the school to respond quickly to individual pupils' needs and interests. This means that the range of learning experiences available is not suitable to meet the needs of pupils currently placed at the school.

The close working between staff in the school and children's home helps to promote a consistency of approach in meeting pupils' emotional needs. Care staff play a key role in delivering aspects of the curriculum such as independent living skills, outdoor education and personal and social education. However, lines of responsibility for learning in these areas are not clear, and planning for these different aspects is not

co-ordinated well enough. In particular, the role and responsibility of the headteacher in relation to these aspects of the curriculum is not clear. As a result, he does not have sufficient oversight of topics that are covered and the progress that pupils make in these areas. As a result, the school is unable to identify potential gaps in pupils' learning and understanding.

School policies do not make sufficient reference to Welsh Government guidance. They are not detailed enough and many have not been updated to provide an effective guide to current practice. As a result, they do not comply with the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 in important aspects of the school's provision, including the quality of the curriculum and policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003
- R2 Clarify the responsibilities of the headteacher and provide external support for the leadership of the school
- R3 Strengthen links with external providers to complement the school's provision and to enable pupils to access accreditation and qualifications
- R4 Improve the co-ordination and planning of independent living skills, outdoor education and personal and social education
- R5 Ensure that school policies refer appropriately to Welsh Government guidance and guide practice at the school

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous visit or inspection report

Recommendation 1: Ensure that pupils have regular opportunities across the curriculum to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills

In common with all schools, the school has faced considerable challenges over the last 18 months due to the pandemic. Staff have worked hard to ensure the school has remained open to provide an education for its pupils throughout this period. Teaching staff used digital technology to support learning by utilising an online platform when pupils or teachers were unable to attend school. During this time, they liaised appropriately with the staff within the care home to support delivery of lessons.

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has increased the use of ICT within the school. Pupils have access to online education packages such as a financial literacy course. However, opportunities to use ICT in lessons remain limited and teachers do not provide pupils with enough planned opportunities to develop a wide enough range of ICT skills progressively across the curriculum. The school does not have an agreed approach for the development of pupils' ICT or digital competence skills.

Recommendation 2: Complete the revision of the curriculum

The school has made limited progress against this recommendation.

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has appointed a new headteacher. The previous headteacher had begun to review the curriculum, education policies and practice to ensure that the school plans and delivers its provision in line with pupils needs. Following the departure of the previous headteacher, this work ceased.

Different aspects of the curriculum, in particular the planning for pupils' independent living skills, outdoor education and personal and social education, are not co-ordinated well enough. In addition, the range of learning experiences is not broad enough to reflect the interests and aspirations of the current pupil cohort.

Recommendation 3: Update relevant education policies and procedures to reflect the revised practice and curriculum changes

The school has recently reviewed its curriculum policy. This sets out the school's aims and aspirations but, overall, lacks detail to explain how the curriculum will ensure it achieves them. Other education policies have not been updated since 2012. As a result, the school's main education policies do not provide a meaningful guide to practice or explain how the various strands of the company's provision – the educational, residential and therapeutic – work together to provide a coherent experience that promotes learning for pupils and staff. Overall, the school has made extremely limited progress against this recommendation.

Recommendation 4: Consider developing an independent board to provide support and challenge the work of the school

The school has not taken appropriate actions to address this recommendation and the arrangements to provide support and challenge for the work of the school remain inadequate. School leaders lack the necessary understanding of the requirements for compliance with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. While the headteacher has identified relevant priorities for improvement, these do not address shortcomings in important areas of the school's provision. Overall, self-evaluation arrangements are underdeveloped. For example, there are no processes to quality assure standards of teaching or learning or the provision of outdoor education and life skills in the home. As a result, leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

Compliance with the standards for registration

Standard 1: The quality of education provided by the school

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 it has a curriculum policy set out in writing supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and implement it effectively [1(2)]

- Ensure the curriculum gives pupils of compulsory school age experience in the following areas of learning: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative [1(2)(a)(ii)]
- Ensure the subject matter is appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with a statement [1(2)(b)]
- Ensure the policy enables pupils to acquire skills in speaking/listening/literacy/numeracy [1(2)(c)]
- Provide personal, social and health education which reflects its aims and ethos [1(2)(f)]
- Ensure the curriculum provides the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress [1(2)(i)]
- Ensure there is adequate preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life [1(2)(j)]

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

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 2.

Standard 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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:

- Prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in compliance with with Welsh Government Guidance 272 / 2021 Keeping Learners Safe

Standard 4: The suitability of proprietors and staff

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect Standard 4.

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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [Estyn Site](#)

© Crown Copyright 2022: 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: 21/04/2022