



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

A report on

Canolfan Bro Tywi

**Canolfan Bro Tywi,
Llansteffan Road
Johnstown
Carmarthen
SA31 3NQ**

Date of inspection: November 2024

by

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

About Canolfan Bro Tywi

Name of provider	Canolfan Bro Tywi
Local authority	Carmarthenshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Multi-site provision?	No
Number of pupils on roll	27
Pupils of statutory school age	27
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	04/12/2017
Start date of inspection	11/11/2024

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Summary

Leaders have established a clear vision for the PRU, which supports pupils to 'have success today and be prepared for tomorrow'. They have successfully developed a caring community where nearly all pupils feel safe and build positive working relationships with their staff and peers.

Leaders have developed meaningful relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, including strong links between the PRU and the pupils' families. Daily check-in ensures that any important information is communicated from the pupils' home to staff successfully. Home visits take place where there is a concern around attendance due to anxiety or other issues.

A committed team of teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively to adapt their approaches and the curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils well. The curriculum balances independent and collaborative work and successfully encourages pupils to engage in challenging activities that develop practical skills while fostering communication, independence, team work, responsibility, and confidence. Outdoor learning is a strong feature of the PRU and successfully enhances many pupils' engagement. Equally, the provision of Welsh is a strength of the PRU.

Staff through a range of assessments know the needs of the pupils well. Regular pupil progress monitoring ensures that staff adjust interventions effectively, ensuring that nearly all pupils receive the support necessary to achieve their learning and behaviour targets. However, a very few pupils frequently disrupt classroom activities, exhibiting behaviours that interrupt the flow of lessons and create a challenging environment for both staff and peers. Well-being interventions are a strong feature of the provision and nearly all members of staff have received relevant training in supporting pupils' needs through trauma approaches. As a result, staff respond effectively to behavioural challenges with patience, calmness, empathy, and constructive strategies. This responsive approach ensures that pupils feel understood and respected, even during difficult moments.

Leaders have developed a range of effective interventions which are supporting nearly all pupils to make positive progress in improving their attendance. Whilst this represents significant progress from their previous placements, the overall attendance still remains at 73%.

Pupils are well supported with transition into their next specialist placements, however very few pupils move on to mainstream schools at the end of Year 6 or back into mainstream schools during their time in the PRU.

The PRU benefits from the helpful support of local authority officers. Overall, the management committee discharge their required roles and responsibilities suitably. However, there are limited opportunities to evaluate the work of the PRU through first hand experiences. As a result, opportunities to effectively challenge and support PRU leaders are underdeveloped.

Recommendations

We have made three recommendations to help the PRU continue to improve:

- R1 Leaders together with the local authority and management committee clarify the role of the PRU as a short-term provision
- R2 Formalise the role of middle leaders, to drive improvement in the quality and consistency of teaching and learning
- R3 Strengthen the involvement of the management committee to challenge and support leaders at the PRU effectively

What happens next

The PRU will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Pupil experiences

Nearly all pupils feel safe at the PRU. They build positive working relationships with their staff and peers as they settle into their new setting. Upon joining the PRU, pupils undertake comprehensive baseline assessments that enable teachers to identify individual needs accurately. Teachers use this data to tailor their planning to meet each pupil's specific needs effectively. Regular pupil progress monitoring ensures that staff adjust interventions effectively, such that nearly all pupils receive the support necessary to achieve their learning and behaviour targets. The recent purchase of a commercial system to record levels of attainment is at the early stage of development and it is too early to evaluate its impact.

When new pupils join the PRU, they often require a phased introduction to build their resilience and confidence in the setting. Leaders ensure these arrangements are used only when necessary and have robust pastoral support plans in place. However, the current arrangements with the local authority transport service to accommodate the needs of these pupils hinders the transition process significantly.

The curriculum balances independent and collaborative work well and successfully encourages pupils to engage in activities beyond their comfort zones. For example, shopping for resources at a garden centre or planning their own involvement in local agricultural shows. These experiences allow pupils to develop practical skills while fostering communication, independence, team work, responsibility and confidence. By encouraging problem-solving and adaptability, the curriculum promotes resilience and helps pupils approach new challenges confidently.

Outdoor learning opportunities enhances many pupils' engagement, with staff observing reduced behavioural challenges during these sessions. These activities take place regularly and provide valuable opportunities for pupils. For example, pupils look after the garden and plan what to plant during weekly outdoor sessions which strengthens their positive attitudes towards learning. This balanced approach ensures that pupils develop a well-rounded skill set.

Creative literacy initiatives such as "free write Friday" encourages pupils to participate enthusiastically in learning activities and successfully improve their engagement in writing. Many pupils who previously lacked confidence in their writing and language skills are now creating extended pieces of work, independently. They practise and re-enforce the writing skills presented during the week and develop their understanding of different genres. This activity is having a positive impact on their literacy and communication skills.

During their time at the PRU many pupils make sound progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. They learn to listen to staff instructions, or their peers during group work. For example, following instructions and working with a peer to make slime. Over time pupils use these skills well in their learning.

Many pupils, due to frequent and varied opportunities throughout the curriculum, develop their physical skills successfully. For example, during 'amser sgiliau' they practice hitting golf balls at the driving range, or during phonics interventions they jump on to stepping stones to match the number of syllables in a word. Further, nearly all pupils participate in the daily morning mile walk with their peers.

Most pupils develop their digital skills effectively and apply them across various areas of learning. Most pupils use their online workspaces securely, using a range of digital tools to research, create, edit, and submit their work. They identify both the benefits and risks of sharing personal information or granting software access to their devices. Younger pupils use different digital tools, such as creating word clouds with emotional language, and upload their work to multiple online platforms confidently. Older pupils use a wider range of programs, allowing them to make interactive presentations and use pie charts to analyse and display data about healthy drink choices.

The provision of Welsh is a strength at the PRU. Welsh-medium pupils have worthwhile opportunities to develop their Welsh-language skills, with access to targeted Welsh support sessions. Incentives, including class points and certificates, encourage pupils to use Welsh in the classroom. Many members of staff use their Welsh language skills effectively as part of their everyday teaching. This is having a highly positive effect on the pupils' standards, especially with the younger pupils.

The PRU has made significant strides in promoting peace, tolerance, and global understanding. This focus is incorporated into the PRU's core development plan and is supported by staff members, parents and the management committee. Older pupils speak confidently about the importance of peace, showing their understanding of how these values relate to themselves and the world around them.

Well-being interventions are a strong feature of the provision and nearly all members of staff have received relevant training in supporting pupils' needs through trauma

approaches. Staff assess pupils' trauma responses and useful sensory tools have been created recently which are shared with teachers and support staff. Further support is provided to pupils attending intervention sessions through the PRU's (Canolfan Bro Tywi) 'CBT Gang' which allows pupils to relate their own personal stories. Pupils' well-being is reviewed termly and many make suitable progress in developing coping skills and strategies. There are strong links between the PRU and the pupils' families and daily morning check-in by staff are used to share any important information that has been provided by the pupils' home. Home visits take place where there is a concern around attendance due to anxiety or other issues.

A very few pupils frequently disrupt classroom activities, exhibiting behaviours that interrupt the flow of lessons and create a challenging environment for both staff and peers. In this supportive setting, staff recognise the diverse needs and circumstances of each pupil and respond effectively to behavioural challenges with patience, calmness, empathy, and constructive strategies. This responsive approach ensures that pupils feel understood and respected, even during difficult moments, which contributes significantly to the safe and caring atmosphere of the PRU. During their time at the PRU nearly all pupils make improvements in their behaviour. However, instances of physically aggressive behaviours directed at staff and visitors impact the ability of other pupils to concentrate and engage fully in their own learning.

Leaders have established a clear vision for the PRU, that supports pupils to 'have success today and be prepared for tomorrow'. They have successfully developed a caring community, a secure safeguarding culture where pupils feel safe and are supported by a committed team of teachers and teaching assistants.

Leaders analyse a range of relevant first-hand information to evaluate the performance of the PRU. This includes feedback from important partners including pupils, parents and mainstream schools. Further, staff feel they are pivotal in shaping the emerging priorities for the PRU. As a result, leaders have identified suitable improvement priorities for the PRU. However, many of these initiatives are newly established and it is too soon to evaluate their impact.

Leaders provide a positive range of professional learning opportunities for staff. In addition to mandatory training in important areas such as safeguarding, staff benefit from opportunities to develop their understanding of how best to support the well-being and learning of pupils, for example through training on the impact of trauma, how to support pupils with sensory needs, and links with the literacy co-ordinators of local schools. Where staff have benefited from training there are regular opportunities to share this practice with their peers through staff meetings. As a result, the PRU is developing a skilled work force to meet the wide complex range of needs of pupils effectively.

Staff work together effectively to adapt their approaches and the curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils well. Leaders have recently introduced a whole PRU approach to curriculum planning which includes the progression of pupils' skills. This is at the early stage of implementation and it is too early to evaluate the impact. .

Nearly all staff value the open communication across the centre. They feel supported by leaders and the team around them. Leaders are in the very early stages of building capacity for middle leaders at the PRU.

Since the time of the last inspection there has been a change to the profile of pupils referred to the PRU, including the addition of pupils who were moved following the closure of a local special school. New pupils are assigned to the PRU through a local authority placement panel. The PRU manager is not a member of this panel and this hinders her ability to plan effectively for the arrival of new pupils or share any insight into compatibility of these new pupils. At the time of the inspection around half of pupils were new to the PRU since the beginning of the academic year. As a result, the complexity of needs of pupils has significantly increased and a few require long term educational placements. This reduces the availability of short-term placements for pupils waiting to access the PRU.

All pupils in the PRU have an individual development plan (IDP). Leaders use person-centred planning approaches effectively during admission meetings and when developing or reviewing IDPs. The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCO) works diligently to review pupil IDPs based on their presenting needs. Parents and other partners are always invited to engage meaningfully with IDP reviews and the ALNCO has devised a useful bar graph system to provide an accessible visual comparison of each pupil's progress against their chronological age.

Leaders have developed a range of effective interventions to improve the attendance of pupils once they join the PRU. For example, through wellbeing interventions, incentives and close working with parents. During their time at the PRU, nearly all pupils make positive progress in improving their attendance. For many pupils this represents significant progress from their previous placements. However, overall attendance still remains at 73%. Nearly all pupils are supported well with transitions into their next specialist placements, however, very few pupils return to mainstream schools during their time at the PRU or at the end of Year 6

Leaders have developed meaningful relationships with a wide range of stakeholders to meet the needs of pupils and support their improved and continued engagement in education. For example, most parents value the open communication they have with the PRU about their child. Further, leaders have developed beneficial partnerships with a range of support services. These include specialist teachers and counselling services. In addition, the PRU works effectively with the local community such as care homes and food banks.

The PRU benefits from the helpful support of local authority officers. Overall, the management committee discharge their required roles and responsibilities suitably. They have an adequate understanding of the PRU's strengths and areas for development. However, there are limited opportunities to evaluate the work of the PRU through first hand experiences. As a result, opportunities to effectively challenge and support PRU leaders are underdeveloped.

Additional information

The PRU's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

The PRU's arrangements for site security do not give any cause for concern.

The PRU has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and the management committee manage the PRU's finances appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the management committee through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the PRU and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, management committee, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the PRU's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their PRU
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the PRU council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the PRU to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the PRU's self-evaluation processes
- consider the PRU's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the PRU has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of PRU documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the management committee, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

Copies of the report

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

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

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

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