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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Annual monitoring inspection report on

The Potteries

Date of inspection: October 2014

by

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

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DRAFT AND CONFIDENTIAL

Context

The Potteries School opened in November 2012. The classroom is based in a large house in Abermule, near Newtown, which also houses a children's home. The children's home is registered with CSSIW for up to four young people aged 10 to 18.

The proprietor, CareTech UK, is a limited company which owns children's homes across England and Wales.

The Potteries has been established as an intake and assessment centre. Most of the young people attend a 16 week programme, before moving on to other placements. Where appropriate, young people may stay up to a maximum of 26 weeks.

Young people are placed by local authorities in England and Wales.

The school provides full time education, including national curriculum subjects and ASDAN. The classroom provides an appropriate learning environment.

Main findings

Strengths

The strengths are that:

- the headteacher provides effective leadership for the day-to-day running of the school and communicates a clear vision for the school;
- the headteacher builds effective partnerships with a range of partners who provide valuable work experience and social learning experiences for pupils;
- the curriculum is broad and provides for a wide range of subjects and activities;
- lessons are planned well to meet the learning needs of individual pupils;
- the school produces a comprehensive and detailed assessment report for each pupil. The reports provide useful information on preferred learning styles, standards of academic performance and strategies to support the development of social and emotional skills. The reports are used effectively to support the transition of pupils to new placements;
- education and care support staff work well as a team and have high expectations of the pupils' attendance, behaviour and progress; and
- nearly all pupils engage well with education and make good progress with the development of social and communication skills.

Areas for development

The areas for development are that:

- the process of self-evaluation is underdeveloped and does not draw on a wide range of stakeholders;
- the arrangements for performance management do not include the observation of lessons. The process does not identify targets to improve teaching and does not focus well enough on the outcomes that pupils achieve; and
- the proprietor does not provide effective support and challenge for the headteacher in identifying priority actions for development and does not hold the school to account appropriately for the standards pupils achieve.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that self-evaluation processes are comprehensive and draw on evidence from a wide range of stakeholders
- R2 Ensure that lesson observations are included in the self-evaluation process and identify targets for staff development and improved outcomes for pupils
- R3 Ensure that the proprietor supports the school as a critical friend and holds the school to account for the standards pupils achieve

Progress against key issues for action identified during the second registration visit

1 Make sure that planning clearly identifies opportunities for developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum

Commentary

All lessons start with a literacy activity that has an appropriate focus on developing communication and oracy skills. Numeracy activities are clearly identified and planned for in units of work to develop independent living skills, for example the units on nutrition and food preparation also include budgeting activities. The headteacher plans appropriate opportunities for pupils to use ICT to research information and present work in lessons across the curriculum.

2 Develop opportunities for pupils to achieve accreditation for the work that they do

Commentary

The school delivers units of work from both the AQA and ASDAN schemes. This enables pupils to complete short units of work that can build into qualifications at entry level and GCSE. This is appropriate for the short term nature of the placements. The school records the units that pupils complete and shares this information with new placements. This provides the opportunity for progression between placements and provides pupils with a sense of achievement.

The school has applied to WJEC and is awaiting registration as an examination centre. Meanwhile, pupils entering for GCSE examinations are entered at another centre within the organisation.

3 Ensure that all relevant staff receive appropriate training to support the additional learning needs of individual pupils

Commentary

Mandatory training is provided during induction for all staff in relation to attachment disorder, emotional intelligence, safeguarding and sexual behaviours. Eight support workers have enrolled on either the level 2 qualification for support work in schools or the level 2/3 in supporting teaching and learning.

However, many of the support staff who lead the vocational activities already hold qualifications for their areas of responsibility. As these sessions are not observed and the standards of teaching and learning are not evaluated, the school does not know what the individual areas of development are for each member of staff. As a result, the training plan is too general and does not relate well enough to individual staff development needs.

4 Ensure that information on pupils' learning needs is fully considered on transition

Commentary

Within six weeks of placement, the school produces a comprehensive and detailed assessment report. This is shared with the multi-agency team and forms the focus of the pupil's individual learning plan.

The report includes useful information about the pupil's learning history, preferred learning styles, assessed levels of performance in the core subjects and strategies to improve engagement, self-confidence and self-esteem. The report is updated regularly using ongoing assessments carried out by the integrated team and provides effective support for transition to new placements.

5 Develop processes for self-evaluation and development planning

Commentary

The school has a development plan that prioritises areas for development and attaches suitable resources and timescales to actions.

However, processes for self-evaluation and development planning remain underdeveloped. The school does not have an up-to-date self-evaluation report and does not gather evidence from a wide enough range of stakeholders or quality assurance activities. For example, there is no system of lesson observations to inform judgments about the quality of teaching. As a result, the school development plan does not focus well enough on improving the standard of teaching and the outcomes that pupils achieve.

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, social 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

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 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 the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Recommendation regarding registration

When considering this school's registration the National Assembly for Wales may wish to have regard to the following recommendation:

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

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

School information

School	The Potteries
School number	6666051
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	22/10/2014
Proprietor	CareTech UK
Staff	1 x headteacher,
Number of pupils	4
Provision	Day provision linked to children's home
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the school	Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
Last Section 163 inspection	
Last annual monitoring inspection	01/11/2013
Last CSSIW inspection	17/07/2014

Team information

Mr Anthony Mulcahy	Reporting Inspector
Elizabeth Ann Dackevych	Team Inspector