



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

A report on

**Y Daith
The Amelia Trust Farm
Whitton Rosser
Five Mile Lane
Barry
CF62 3AS**

Date of inspection: March 2019

by

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

About Y Daith

Y Daith Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is maintained by The Vale of Glamorgan local authority. The PRU provides education for up to 56 pupils aged 11 to 16 years across two sites. Currently, 19 pupils in key stage 3 attend full-time provision on the site of the Amelia Trust Farm, a working farm and training provider near Barry. Twenty-five key stage 4 pupils access part-time programmes of education for either two or three days a week at the PRU's site in Cowbridge. These pupils attend placements with the Vale Youth Service and training providers during the rest of the week to complete their programmes.

A further 30 learners educated other than at school (EOTAS) are on the roll of the PRU but do not attend lessons there. They attend placements with local training providers, the local college or receive home tuition. The teacher-in-charge of the PRU shares responsibility for monitoring aspects of their provision with the local authority.

All pupils attending the PRU have special educational needs (SEN) due to their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and a range of other learning difficulties. A few pupils have statements of special educational needs. A minority of pupils are eligible for free school meals and a few pupils are looked after by the local authority. Nearly all pupils come from English-speaking backgrounds.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve at the PRU with national averages or to analyse the performance trends of groups of pupils over time because of the nature of the pupils' social, emotional and behavioural needs.

There is a teacher-in-charge on each site. The teacher-in-charge with overall responsibility for the PRU took up post in September 2013.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Y Daith is a caring and supportive environment where staff and pupils build positive and productive working relationships. Staff have a strong understanding of pupils' individual needs and plan carefully to address these through the curriculum and through beneficial partnerships with external agencies. As a result, nearly all pupils feel safe and valued, and many make effective progress in their wellbeing and their attitudes to learning.

Many pupils make secure progress in their learning during their time at the PRU and nearly all move on to suitable destinations at the end of key stage 4. They make particularly strong progress in lessons where the quality of teachers' planning and assessment is high. However, in a minority of lessons, teaching does not meet the needs of pupils well enough and as a result, a few pupils across the PRU do not make the progress they are capable of.

Senior leaders provide stable and reflective leadership. Leaders and staff share a clear vision for the school based on providing a caring and inclusive environment where all can succeed. However, leaders do not use the outcomes of quality assurance activities well enough to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning. Further, the PRU's model of part-time provision at key stage 4 does not meet the needs of a minority of pupils well enough.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Adequate and needs improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate and needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Adequate and needs improvement

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that timetabled provision and resources at key stage 4 meet the needs of all pupils
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching
- R3 Ensure that tracking systems provide a clear picture of the progress pupils make over time
- R4 Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning processes

What happens next

The PRU will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the PRU's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

Many pupils make appropriate progress in engaging successfully with education during the time they spend at the PRU. They respond positively to the PRU's supportive ethos and the skilled support of teachers and learning support staff. Over time, this helps them to build their confidence, and improve their participation in learning and wellbeing in relation to their needs and abilities. Pupils make particularly strong progress in developing their understanding and skills in lessons where there is high quality planning and assessment.

Many pupils improve their communication skills well during their time at the PRU. They listen attentively to staff, recall prior learning accurately and respond appropriately to questioning. Many pupils take turns suitably and show respect for each other's views. The majority provide more extended contributions to justify their opinions successfully in class discussions, for example in English when discussing the use of similes in a text. However, a few pupils are not considerate enough when listening to others. They interrupt or call out and distract the learning of their peers.

Many pupils make secure progress in improving their reading skills. They locate key information from short texts and draw suitable conclusions from source material, for example at key stage 3, when researching about the impact of industry on climate change, and at key stage 4 when evaluating and synthesising information from a range of online news sources to inform their understanding of childhood obesity.

The majority of pupils improve the accuracy and organisation of their written work appropriately over time. They write effectively in short paragraphs to inform and explain, for example, when writing about the benefits of exercise, or the steps necessary to complete the making of a healthy snack. They broaden their range of vocabulary and improve their use of punctuation and basic accuracy when redrafting their work in response to teachers' written feedback. However, a minority of pupils do not take sufficient care with their written work and make too many basic errors in their spelling and punctuation.

Across the PRU, the majority of pupils improve their numeracy skills suitably. They consolidate their understanding of the four rules of number successfully, and become more confident in selecting appropriate methods for calculation, for example when changing percentages to fractions. They interpret data appropriately when extracting key information from charts and graphs, for example on the frequency and types of bullying in schools in Wales. However, a minority of pupils do not make sufficient progress in developing their numeracy skills. Often, this is because the frequent use of worksheets does not challenge pupils' problem-solving skills well enough or help them to show their written calculations. In addition, there are limited opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills progressively across the curriculum.

In many lessons, pupils make effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to research topics to inform their project work. Many pupils use word processing and presentation software competently to redraft and improve the presentation of their work. For example, they create newspapers, fact-sheets and

posters to adapt their understanding of topics, such as the dangers of smoking, to different audiences. However, pupils do not develop their ICT skills well enough as they move through the PRU.

Over the last three years, all pupils achieve at least one recognised qualification at level 1 in courses that are generally well matched to their needs and abilities. In 2018, nearly all Year 11 pupils left with a GCSE in both English and mathematics at level 1 or above. These qualifications support pupils well in making the transition to further education or work-based training. Overall, because of the complexity of their needs, a minority of pupils in key stage 4 achieve less well in their off-site placements.

Over the last three years, nearly all pupils who leave the PRU at the end of key stage 4 move on to further education, training or employment. However, only a very few pupils reintegrate successfully into mainstream schools.

Across the PRU, pupils make limited progress in their Welsh language development.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

The productive working relationships between staff and pupils are a notable feature of the PRU's work. The strength and quality of these relationships promote a positive atmosphere of trust and respect that is particularly conducive to pupils' wellbeing and learning.

Across the PRU, many pupils attend regularly and arrive punctually to lessons. They engage enthusiastically with morning routines such as tutor group discussions on current affairs during registration sessions. In lessons, many pupils display effective attitudes towards their learning, engage well with teachers and support staff, and take pride in their work. Over time, they develop successfully the confidence and skills they need to work in lessons with increasing independence.

Many pupils learn to manage their own behaviour in lessons by responding suitably to reward systems. They understand the thresholds of acceptable behaviour in class, and generally respond appropriately to guidance and support from learning support assistants. The number of fixed-term exclusions, although higher than expected given the positive culture across the PRU, is declining.

Many pupils are polite and respectful to visitors, and a minority of pupils in both key stage 3 and key stage 4 demonstrate the confidence to engage maturely in discussions about their experiences in the PRU. They are able to compare and contrast their present opportunities with their previous experiences, and identify how and why their current placements are supporting them to make improved progress in their learning.

Many pupils participate enthusiastically in forums such as school council meetings and the 'my ideas' initiative to express their opinions and views. These suggestions have resulted in constructive changes to the building, rewards system and off-site activities.

Most pupils feel safe in the PRU and there are very few incidents of bullying. They develop a thorough understanding of internet safety through well-planned programmes of personal and social education. Many pupils develop an effective understanding of healthy lifestyles through the taught curriculum and through the support and interventions of teachers, learning support assistants and agencies. For

example, they engage successfully with a range of off-site activities to develop their physical skills and resilience, such as gorge walking and boxing. These activities reinforce positive staff and pupil relationships very successfully.

Pupils across key stage 3 and key stage 4 engage successfully with programmes to support their wellbeing through nurture-based interventions and multi-agency support such as the school nurse. This valuable support enables pupils to improve their self-esteem and wellbeing, and in turn helps the majority of pupils to improve their attendance. However, due to the complexity of their needs, a minority of pupils in key stage 4 struggle to attend the off-site placements that form part of their weekly timetabled provision. This has a detrimental impact on their individual progress and wellbeing, as well as overall attendance at key stage 4.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

The PRU provides the majority of pupils with a relevant curriculum, which generally supports their academic development successfully and includes an appropriate range of suitably engaging learning experiences. Pupils in key stage 3 access a broadly thematic curriculum that focuses closely on developing their core literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Key stage 4 pupils attend lessons on-site for two or three days a week where they follow a limited range of core GCSE and entry pathway courses to gain nationally recognised qualifications.

At key stage 4, in addition to the on-site core curriculum, all pupils choose from a suite of over 35 different accredited vocational courses with external providers. This extensive range of courses helps pupils to develop their interests, skills and qualifications across a wide variety of subjects and areas of learning including animal care, construction, catering, public services and hair and beauty. However, more able pupils have limited opportunities to follow higher level qualifications. Further, there is no opportunity for key stage 4 pupils to attend the on-site provision full-time. This means that the needs of a minority of pupils are not always met, particularly those who would benefit from a more nurturing environment.

Staff build strong working relationships with pupils during their time at the PRU. In classrooms, they provide an inclusive environment which nurtures and supports pupils well and which has a positive effect on their development, progress and self-esteem. Many teachers use their knowledge and understanding of the pupils successfully to plan a range of lesson activities and resources that motivate and help them to learn from real-life contexts. For example, key stage 4 pupils survey businesses in their area and identify opportunities for employment within their own community as part of their personal development course.

In the majority of lessons, teaching meets the needs of pupils effectively. Teachers work closely with learning support assistants in providing valuable support to pupils to enable them to make suitable progress. For example, they share their knowledge of pupils' difficulties in literacy and numeracy skilfully to provide early support and address these issues sensitively.

In a minority of lessons, planning and activities do not meet the needs of pupils well enough. For example, across the PRU, teachers rely heavily on worksheets. On occasion, this has a negative impact on pupils' ability to demonstrate their knowledge and restricts their opportunities to write for a suitable range of audiences and purposes. Further, in these lessons, more able pupils are not provided with enough challenge.

Teachers and learning support staff provide encouraging verbal feedback that many pupils respond to positively. The majority of teachers provide useful written feedback to help pupils to improve. In a few lessons, teachers use pupil self and peer assessment effectively to support further learning. For example, in key stage 3, pupils are provided with examples of fictitious diary entries and asked to mark them using a set of criteria. This helps them to identify the best points, which they use when drafting their own diary entries.

The planning of and provision for the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum at key stage 3 is secure. However, at key stage 4, provision is limited, partly because pupils only attend for two or three days a week.

Across the PRU, the planning for the progressive development of pupils' ICT skills is underdeveloped and there are insufficient opportunities to develop pupils' Welsh language skills.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The PRU provides a safe and supportive environment that promotes successfully the development of pupils' confidence, self-esteem and progress in learning. Staff work together closely to build strong working relationships with pupils. As a result, many pupils improve their behaviour and participation in learning significantly during their time at the PRU.

Staff across the PRU plan carefully to develop pupils' understanding of important issues relevant to their present and future wellbeing. They work closely with a wide range of agencies that contribute effectively to developing pupils' understanding of contemporary social issues, such as knife crime, county lines and substance misuse. This strong focus on relevant aspects of personal and social education helps pupils to appreciate the benefits of making healthy lifestyle choices and how to keep themselves safe. In addition, the PRU has recently introduced beneficial opportunities to build emotional resilience and team-working through enrichment activities such as zorb football, trampolining and battle archery.

The PRU has effective arrangements for pupils to contribute to decision-making and improve the life of the school. Senior leaders meet regularly with the school council and take good account of their views when shaping action plans at both key stages. This approach ensures that pupils contribute constructively to improving the range of opportunities and facilities at the PRU. For example, they have championed successfully access to the local leisure centre to be included as part of the timetable.

Senior leaders have recently introduced a number of worthwhile initiatives to strengthen the provision for the support and guidance of pupils. This provision includes the development of a nurture group in key stage 4 and the introduction of individual pathway plans to improve pupils' involvement in setting and monitoring their progress against their long-term goals. Both these initiatives are at an early stage of development and it is too soon to evaluate their impact.

Teaching staff plan effectively to support pupils to make the transition to the world of work. Pupils have beneficial opportunities to engage with a wide range of external training providers to access valuable vocational training, which support the majority of pupils well. Pupils benefit from worthwhile opportunities to develop important independence skills, which help prepare them well for life when they leave the PRU. For example, they learn valuable food preparation skills and improve their understanding of banking and personal finance.

The PRU has suitable systems to track the progress pupils make in their wellbeing, behaviour and attendance. Staff work productively with a beneficial range of partners to provide valuable support for pupils to help them to improve their attendance and engagement in learning. These include access to counsellors and relevant medical services. For example, the PRU has recently introduced termly meetings with the community paediatrician team to identify and address extra support for pupils at high levels of risk. The PRU has recently appointed an attendance officer to provide more effective support for the minority of pupils who struggle to improve their attendance, although it is too soon to judge the impact of this work.

Staff take appropriate steps to assess pupils' starting points in literacy and numeracy when they join the PRU, and generally monitor pupils' progress in the development of these skills carefully. They use this information appropriately to inform their planning, and to identify when pupils require additional support to improve specific shortcomings in these areas. However, tracking systems do not capture well enough the progress pupils make who join the PRU at different stages of the year. In addition, tracking and monitoring arrangements do not provide a clear enough picture of the progress pupils make over time.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The teacher-in-charge, senior leaders and management committee have been successful in establishing a clear vision for the PRU. This vision is based on meeting pupils' needs by providing them with opportunities to succeed in an inclusive and caring environment, and endorses strongly the PRU's adopted adage that 'every journey begins with a single step'.

The teacher-in-charge and senior management team provide reflective and stable leadership. Through the coherent structure of team meetings, they set high expectations for staff and their pupils. For example, during key stage team meetings, staff share information about best practice ideas, discuss current issues, monitor pupil progress robustly and plan for future developments. The items discussed at these meetings link closely to the priorities that are driving the action plans for each key stage, and the school improvement plan. Together with strong team-working with teaching and support staff, this ensures the smooth day-to-day running of the PRU.

The management committee has recently been strengthened to include representation from backgrounds with specialist expertise to benefit the PRU. The recently appointed chairperson has quickly developed a secure understanding of their role and responsibilities. Through the management committee's useful structure of sub-committees, members gain a clear insight into the PRU's strengths and areas for development. They use this information appropriately to work with the teacher-in-charge and senior leaders in setting the strategic priorities for the PRU. Overall, it is too early to evaluate the impact of the recently strengthened management committee on challenging the leadership of the PRU and the local authority to bring about improvements in pupils' performance and the quality of provision.

The PRU has developed largely suitable arrangements to evaluate the quality of its work and to plan for improvements. These arrangements include a programme of lesson observations and work scrutiny. However, evaluations from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work are not sharp enough or used well enough to identify suitably measurable targets as part of improvement planning. Senior leaders also make beneficial use of wider evidence, particularly information gathered from listening to the pupils' voice such as the key stage 3 school council survey about the quality of provision at the PRU and off-site providers. However, staff do not have enough opportunities to contribute to the self-evaluation process.

The PRU has appropriate systems to manage the performance of all staff and to identify a wide range of suitable professional learning activities for staff. For example, as part of improvement planning for managing pupil behaviour, all staff have visited other providers to observe different systems and best practice. They routinely share and discuss their findings from professional learning as part of the regular meeting process. Where underperformance is identified, this is usually dealt with sensitively and firmly, including with the support of the local authority or consortia, where appropriate. However, performance management arrangements have not had enough sustained impact on reducing the variation in the quality of teaching and improving pupils' performance.

Over the last two years, the teacher-in-charge has taken on additional responsibilities working with the local authority's social inclusion and wellbeing lead officer. These responsibilities include monitoring the provision and outcomes for an additional group of about 30 pupils educated other than at school (EOTAS) across the local authority. However, the teacher-in-charge's job description does not relate fully to the role he is now carrying out. This lack of detail impedes understanding about expectations and support, and blurs lines of accountability.

Staff at the PRU are generally suitably qualified and experienced to meet the needs of the pupils. The teacher-in-charge and management committee work closely with the local authority to ensure that financial planning takes account of the PRU's priorities. These priorities include suitable use of grant funding such as the pupil development grant to support vulnerable pupils and improve their outcomes, for example, through the recently established nurture programme.

The learning environment for pupils is confined to a relatively small space within both sites of the PRU, and there is almost no outside play area. This means that pupils do not have the opportunity to benefit from having an outside open environment during lessons and play. Further, on the key stage 4 site, the arrangement of two cohorts of pupils using the site at different times means that it is difficult for pupils to receive their education at the site full-time, even though it may suit their needs better.

Copies of the report

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

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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 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

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