



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

A report on

**Trinity Fields School & Resource Centre
Caerphilly Road
Ystrad Mynach
Hengoed
CF82 7XW**

Date of inspection: June 2019

by

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

About Trinity Fields School & Resource Centre

Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre is the only special school serving the county borough of Caerphilly. Currently there are 159 pupils on roll aged from 3 to 19 years. Nearly all pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) for severe learning difficulties, physical and medical difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders (ASD).

Nearly all pupils come from within the county borough and a very few come from a neighbouring local authority. All of the pupils are from English-speaking backgrounds. Around 40% of pupils receive free school meals. A very few pupils are looked after by the local authority.

In addition to the provision on the Trinity Fields site, the school operates two satellite classes at Cwm Ifor Primary School and St Cenydd Community School. The resource centre based at the school works in partnership with the local authority to provide a range of services to support pupils with SEN in mainstream schools across the local authority. These services include the Caerphilly autistic spectrum service (CASS), health-based clinics, an outreach and inclusion service, youth and leisure activities, and respite and home support services.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve at the school with national averages or to analyse the performance trends of groups of pupils over time because of the nature of pupils' special educational needs.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2012. The school was last inspected in November 2012. Since the last inspection, the school has extended its provision to include two satellite classes at local mainstream schools and to provide staff for resource bases at a further two schools in the authority.

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

Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre is a highly inclusive community where all pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils play an active and influential role in shaping the life and work of the school. The school's exemplary levels of care, support and guidance mean that nearly all pupils develop as enthusiastic learners who acquire a strong understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

Pupils at the school have a wide range of learning difficulties and physical and medical needs. They respond very positively to the school's caring and supportive ethos. As a result, nearly all make notable progress in many important areas of their learning and personal development that support their future lives very effectively.

The quality of teaching and engaging learning experiences make a significant contribution to pupils' wellbeing and personal development. Teachers and support staff foster highly positive and valuable professional relationships with their pupils. They treat all pupils with respect and provide exemplary support and encouragement for them in their learning.

The headteacher and members of the senior leadership team provide outstanding strategic leadership for the school. Together they have established a vision that puts meeting the needs of the pupils at the centre of all they do. This vision permeates all aspects of the school's work and contributes significantly to the consistently high levels of pupil progress and wellbeing at the school.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Excellent
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Excellent
Care, support and guidance	Excellent
Leadership and management	Excellent

Recommendations

R1 Develop further the school's strategies to meet the needs of pupils as it implements the Curriculum for Wales

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendation from the inspection.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare two case studies on its work in relation to the impact of its work as a rights respecting school, and its innovative partnership working with the local authority, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Excellent

Nearly all pupils at Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre respond extremely positively to the school's highly inclusive and supportive ethos. As a result, nearly all make notable progress in many important areas of their learning and development that support their future lives very effectively. A few pupils at the school who have particularly complex needs, including those with life-limiting conditions, consolidate their skills and sustain their level of achievement particularly well in relation to their targets. Given the complexity of their individual needs, this represents a considerable achievement for these pupils.

Over time, nearly all pupils make particularly strong progress in achieving the targets on their individual education plans (IEPs). In lessons, most pupils make highly effective progress towards achieving their personal learning goals. They listen carefully and respond positively to the instructions and guidance they receive from staff. In many cases, most pupils recall prior learning confidently and apply this effectively to new activities, for example to create an account of a shopping trip they have made to a local supermarket.

The progress pupils make in developing valuable independence and life skills is an outstanding strength of the school. For example, pupils with complex needs improve their understanding of how to look after their possessions and take responsibility for their personal care. Older pupils learn beneficial skills such as how to use household appliances, food preparation skills and how to plan their weekly shopping requirements. They develop their understanding of the world of work suitably through worthwhile work experience opportunities in the community, for example at a leisure centre or at a local charity.

Most pupils make particularly strong progress in developing their communication skills during their time at the school. For example, pupils with complex needs improve their ability to greet others, make choices and express their needs through using a wide range of communication strategies and assistive technology such as switches and eye-directed technology. Pupils who require support to communicate verbally learn to use an increasing range of signs, symbols and gesture which enables them to demonstrate their understanding and express their emotions successfully. Pupils with well-developed speech engage confidently in conversation with their peers and visitors to the school, and respond enthusiastically to questions from teaching staff.

Many pupils improve their literacy skills very effectively during their time at the school. Pupils at key stage 2 and 3 practise and consolidate their formation of individual letters and spelling of common words. They write short factual and descriptive accounts, for example about the origin of volcanoes or how they have spent the weekend. Older pupils apply their writing skills well to practical scenarios such as composing letters to a friend or to the headteacher to suggest how he could make improvements to the school. More able pupils read confidently in front of their peers, or follow successfully sequences of instructions to conduct simple experiments. They locate information accurately from short informative texts, for example about the story of Guy Fawkes, or use a dictionary to identify the meaning of key words.

Many pupils make beneficial progress in developing their numeracy skills in contexts that support their independence well. For example, they practise addition and subtraction, identify two and three-dimensional shapes, and improve their recognition of different coins. More able pupils describe the characteristics of common shapes, know the value of different coins and tell the time using an analogue clock face.

Many pupils improve their physical skills in relation to their individual abilities particularly successfully, for example, by participating enthusiastically in regular opportunities for physical exercise, outdoor learning or by taking part in initiatives such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Pupils across the school develop their creative skills well, for example by creating textured paintings out of sawdust, paint and glue, making pots and candle holders out of clay, or by taking part in drumming workshops.

Many pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently to make a record of their learning, or to research solutions to specific problems. For example, pupils in the 14-19 phase of the school compare information from supermarket websites to calculate and compare the cost of their weekly shopping bill. Pupils with complex needs make strong progress in learning to use a valuable range of communication devices to make greetings and communicate their choices.

Across the school, pupils develop their understanding of the Welsh language suitably. For example, they respond appropriately to greetings in Welsh and join in enthusiastically in songs in Welsh.

By the time they leave the school, nearly all pupils achieve a suitable range of worthwhile units of credit and accreditation that are well-matched to their needs, interests and abilities.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Pupils' high levels of wellbeing and attitudes to learning are an outstanding strength. Nearly all pupils play an active and influential role in contributing to their learning and shaping the life and work of the school. Over time, nearly all develop as enthusiastic learners who enjoy coming to school and acquire a strong understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and know that staff are always prepared to listen and respond to their concerns or ideas. These pupils have a well-developed awareness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and have produced a version of these articles with symbols for children and young people with special educational needs for use across Wales. As a result, the school council contributed to the launch of the document with the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

This awareness of their rights helps pupils to appreciate that their views are valued and respected. Pupil voice groups play an active part in the school and pupils value greatly their role as a part of the school's decision-making processes. For example, the school council participates in staff recruitment by suggesting highly-appropriate interview questions and sharing its views clearly on the suitability of candidates. Pupils of all ages and abilities express their views through a broad range of

strategies, including the use of photographs and eye-directed technology. These beneficial strategies enable them to identify what they think is good about their school and what they believe would improve it further.

Many pupils understand the importance of eating a balanced diet and taking regular exercise to keep themselves healthy. They apply this understanding constructively to contribute valid suggestions to improve the menu and presentation of their food in the school canteen.

Pupils develop their physical wellbeing and stamina very effectively through regular physical exercise and therapies. Children with very complex physical needs respond positively to planned programmes to support frequent changes in their equipment and positioning during the day. They demonstrate high levels of trust in the staff and an awareness and understanding that these procedures are for their benefit and they co-operate willingly with staff to complete them.

Across the school, pupils develop their social skills well. They work together constructively with their peers and are supportive and encouraging of each other's efforts. Most pupils engage politely with visitors to the school and are keen to explain and celebrate their achievements with them. Pupils in the foundation phase take turns patiently during circle time when one pupil at a time is the centre of attention. They learn to work collaboratively in pairs while getting out equipment and storing it, and take part successfully in group work and sports teams.

Pupils who attend the school's satellite bases at a local primary and secondary school engage confidently with their peers from the mainstream school at lunchtimes and break times. Where appropriate, a few of these pupils participate successfully in subjects in the main school as part of their timetable, for example in art, sport or food technology.

In all phases of the school, pupils display exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. In lessons, nearly all pupils engage enthusiastically in the school's wide range of exciting and stimulating learning activities. They are quick to settle, both at the start of lessons and when moving between activities. Most pupils sustain high levels of concentration and focus well on the task in hand. They persist with tasks and show determination to complete them successfully. Where there are behavioural issues in class, most pupils respond favourably and quickly to a wide range of well-established strategies to support them. Where pupils need to leave the class for medical or behavioural reasons, they use the time out of the classroom effectively and settle back into the lesson very quickly.

A very few pupils enter the school with a history of placement breakdowns. During their time at the school, their sense of self-esteem and wellbeing increases as they learn how to manage their own behaviour. As a result, they improve their attendance, engage more consistently in learning and maintain their placements at the school successfully.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre is an engaging, stimulating and inclusive learning environment. Teachers and support staff foster highly positive and valuable

professional relationships with their pupils. They treat all learners with respect and provide exemplary support and encouragement for them in their learning. They manage pupils' behaviour positively and sensibly. As a result, learning experiences and the quality of teaching make a significant contribution to pupils' high levels of wellbeing and personal development.

Teaching staff have a detailed understanding of pupils' abilities and interests and use this knowledge well to plan engaging tasks that are challenging and stimulating. They set pupils beneficial, personalised targets to enable them to improve and develop important skills. They adapt learning tasks and resources skilfully to respond sensitively to pupils' changing needs and behaviours during the day. In most cases, teachers' planning relates closely to the targets set in pupils' IEPs. This approach supports pupils very effectively to make progress in those areas that promote their wider personal and skills development.

In most cases, teaching staff deploy an extensive range of approaches and carefully-planned resources to engage all pupils in their learning. For example, they use music and song writing creatively to encourage pupils to collaborate as part of a musical band. Staff make highly effective use of facilities such as the outside areas, and sensory and rebound therapy rooms to meet pupils' particular needs.

In most lessons, teaching staff use effective questioning to encourage and stimulate discussion with pupils and provide them with frequent, clear and encouraging verbal feedback. Staff deploy a wide variety of approaches to support pupils to acquire greater independence and resilience, and develop very successfully their confidence to contribute to class discussion. Teaching staff use skilful techniques such as gesture and touch to enable pupils with more complex needs to take part beneficially.

Teachers work together with support staff very effectively as a team to support pupils' learning. Teaching assistants are valuable role models in lessons. They know pupils very well, work successfully with them and are passionate about their work.

The school's creative and effective approaches to the design of the curriculum are a notable strength of the school's work and meet the needs of all pupils exceptionally well. The school implements a highly effective 'stage not age' approach to planning the curriculum and grouping pupils. Skilled teaching staff plan programmes of learning with great care, adapting their planning as necessary to take account of pupils' individual needs and abilities. This consistent and responsive approach ensures a positive impact on most pupils' progress over time.

The school's wellbeing curriculum is exemplary and utilises a range of related frameworks to meet the needs of all pupils and their families. As part of this integrated model, the provision for outdoor learning, for example is developing extremely well. This planning ensures pupils have access to an exciting range of sensory, social and emotional opportunities such as the allotment and sensory garden, which is cared for lovingly by pupils and staff. This approach gives pupils valuable opportunities to apply their skills in real life contexts. For example, pupils have timetabled sessions to use the fire-pit to develop their resilience and participation in unfamiliar contexts.

The school's satellite bases in a nearby primary and secondary school provide beneficial opportunities for a few pupils to apply their skills and access a broader range of learning experiences. This partnership contributes particularly well to the progress these pupils make in their learning and social development.

The school plans a range of stimulating opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills based on the national frameworks. For example, teachers' successful use of the digital competency framework (DCF) ensures that all pupils make progress in developing the particular skills that are most important to them.

Provision for the teaching of Welsh skills is suitable, with appropriate opportunities for pupils to engage in purposeful ways during lessons. The school offers worthwhile provision for pupils to develop their understanding of Welsh culture and heritage, for example through beneficial visits to Big Pit and the National Museum, and projects on Penallta colliery.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school provides exemplary levels of care, support and guidance for its pupils. This highly inclusive approach is instrumental in enabling all pupils, whatever their level of disability or the difficulties they face, to access learning successfully, in line with the school's stated aim of 'learning together in a changing world, creating success for all'.

The school's rigorous use of a wide range of assessment, monitoring and tracking systems ensures staff understand pupils' needs very well from the day they join the school. For example, staff complete detailed initial assessments of pupils' health and learning needs before they join the school. These assessments support very effectively pupils' transition to the school from their previous settings.

The school has developed highly effective partnerships with a wide range of external agencies. These partnerships enable the school to develop valuable support services for pupils that meet their ongoing health and learning needs exceptionally well. These services include beneficial links with health care professionals that support the planning and provision across the school for pupils with a wide range of diverse needs. The school's holiday and Saturday clubs provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to access community facilities outside school hours. This helps them to develop their independence and social skills and supports them well to lead healthy and active lifestyles.

The school makes very strong provision for the development of pupils' personal and social education in the classroom and around the school. For example, an initiative adopted by the school enables pupils to express their feelings and emotions using coloured wrist bands. This has increased pupils' participation and engagement in learning and has had a notably positive impact on their emotional wellbeing.

The school has a well-established culture of promoting pupils' understanding of the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices. Through the work of the school council, pupils play an important and influential role in increasing the range of healthy choices available. They enjoy and value growing their own fruit and vegetables in the excellent facilities located in the school grounds and have opportunities to

develop a thorough understanding of the importance of food hygiene and preparation in 'Caffi Oren'.

The school's exceptional commitment to gaining the status of a rights respecting school ensures that pupil voice underpins all aspects of decision-making, policy writing and planning. Staff have developed and embedded innovative strategies to enable almost all pupils to participate fully in decision-making. For example, pupils with communication difficulties make meaningful contributions to consultations through the effective use of eye-directed technology.

The school plans well to develop pupils' awareness of careers and the world of work. It ensures that a diverse range of experiences, both on-site and in the community, helps pupils to make informed choices about their futures. For example, a very few pupils have achieved the relevant skills and accreditation to lead sporting activities in school. This has led in turn to meaningful work placements and provided pupils with a better understanding of the opportunities for employment in the sports and leisure sector.

The school has developed very effective practice to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This provision includes daily acts of collective worship and tending the school's memorial garden, in addition to weekly departmental assemblies that celebrate pupils' achievements and success.

The school's relationships with parents is a strength of its work. Parents value highly the wide range of opportunities the school provides for them to be involved in their child's education. These opportunities include informative and engaging training on outdoor education and signing, as well as enjoyable social events. The work of the school's outreach team is particularly beneficial and effective in helping parents to support their child's progress at school.

The school has well-established systems to inform parents of their child's progress in learning. Structured reports that provide detailed information on progress as well as regular informal face-to-face contact with teachers, support assistants and specialist staff give parents a strong understanding of their child's achievements. The school makes excellent use of social media to provide daily photographic and video evidence of pupil's achievements.

Throughout the school, assessment processes are rigorous. Staff use skilfully the information these provide to plan the next steps for pupils in their learning. For example, in the 14-19 phase of the school, teachers use individual assessments to identify the most appropriate units of work from a range of nationally accredited schemes.

The school's robust monitoring of assessments is supported by effective moderation at regional and national level. This worthwhile partnership work ensures a high level of consistency across class groups, departments and in specialist resource bases across the local authority.

The school has robust policies and systems that allow staff to monitor and track specific incidents and pupils' behaviour successfully. These arrangements help teachers and specialist support staff to identify those pupils who may require specialist intervention programmes.

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

Leadership and management: Excellent

The headteacher and members of the senior leadership team provide outstanding strategic leadership for the school. Together they have established and communicated a vision for the school that puts meeting the needs of pupils at the centre of all they do. This involves maintaining a sharp focus on ensuring that all pupils know their rights, have a voice and influence over what and how they learn, and access a wide range of stimulating learning experiences in school and the local community. The high quality of leadership, sustained over many years, has led to consistently high levels of pupil progress and wellbeing at the school.

The senior leadership team is made up of representation from each staff team across the school. This inclusive approach ensures that all staff have valuable opportunities to influence and shape school improvement initiatives. As a result, staff feel valued, are well-informed and contribute beneficially to the school's strategic direction. Members of the leadership team have clear roles and responsibilities that they fulfil with enthusiasm. For example, leaders project manage school improvement initiatives by allocating staff to lead specific task and finish groups. These help staff to develop important management skills and generate a high level of commitment to the school's inclusive ethos.

Leaders have established robust systems to evaluate regularly pupils' standards and the quality of provision. These systems draw on a wide range of first-hand evidence such as lesson observations, learning walks and the analysis of data. The school collects and responds well to the views of major stakeholders including staff, pupils and parents. The leadership team works together highly effectively to analyse the findings of self-evaluation and plan further improvements. As a result, leaders know the school's strengths and areas for development well. They promote best practice effectively across the school and encourage a culture of self-improvement and high expectations successfully.

Staff engage well with performance management activities and benefit from a wide range of high-quality training to improve their performance. These opportunities include training for teaching assistants to develop specialist skills, mentoring aspiring leaders to develop their management skills and coaching newly-qualified staff in Trinity Fields and at special schools across the region. Trinity Fields staff share good practice effectively with staff from other special schools in regional cluster groups to improve aspects of teaching such as the use of ICT in lessons.

Leaders have developed highly beneficial and innovative partnerships with local mainstream schools to support the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. The school has developed satellite classes at two local mainstream schools and provides extensive staff support and expertise for resource bases at a further two schools in the authority. The local authority autism support service, which is based at the school, provides highly effective support for pupils with autism at home and in schools across the local authority. These partnerships have enriched pupils' learning experiences, improved pupil outcomes and promote the local authority vision for inclusion extremely effectively.

School improvement planning takes good account of national priorities such as reform of the curriculum and provision for pupils with additional learning needs. For

example, leaders have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that learning experiences develop pupils as healthy, confident and well-informed independent learners who understand their rights and responsibilities. The school allocates suitable resources and realistic timeframes to support these school improvement priorities.

The school has sustained a high level of performance and has a proven track record of addressing successfully targets from Estyn inspections and regional consortium monitoring visits. Leaders and managers across the school are committed to continual improvement and have sustained high performance against a wide range of nationally recognised quality awards that link well to the school's vision and objectives.

The school provides a high-quality learning environment that supports the development of pupils' learning and wellbeing needs very well. Facilities include spacious classrooms that are resourced well to meet pupils' differing needs. The school makes effective use of the pupil development grant to support vulnerable pupils. For example, the school has used this funding to develop valuable approaches to enhance family engagement and to provide job coaching and work-related skills training for pupils in the 14-19 age group.

Governors are frequent visitors and take part in a worthwhile programme of learning walks and training events with staff and pupils. Governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and provide a high level of challenge and support for the school.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school 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:

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